

Context and Best Practices

The purpose of this Context and Best Practices chapter is to provide a fuller context for the types of actions that help implement the plan. It does not provide specific, targeted recommendations for “who should do what,” but it does broadly describe supporting actions. Best practices and case studies are used extensively to provide examples, and also to demonstrate that many actions that support the plan are already underway in metropolitan Chicago. Some of these examples may go beyond the plan’s 12 major recommendation areas, while providing evidence that many of the actions that support the plan are already in place.

The following contextual categories represent types of stakeholders who are responsible for implementing the comprehensive regional plan. Each category includes its own range of decisions and actions, but all stakeholders need to work together to achieve the sustainable prosperity that we seek.

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Throughout this chapter are links to CMAP strategy papers or other materials containing additional information on these topics.

Federal government

The federal government sets the overall tone for policy and planning to maximize our nation's economic prosperity, provide for our common defense, and protect the health and well-being of our citizens. The federal government also remains the chief steward of our major infrastructure systems and many valuable natural resources, all of which greatly impacts decision making at the state and local levels.

When it comes to implementing the types of strategies and policies in regional plans like GO TO 2040, the federal government should play a clear leadership role in steering the efficiency and effectiveness of how public money gets spent at all levels of government.

This section describes how federal decisions affect plan implementation, followed by examples of how GO TO 2040's implementation can be supported by federal actions. These are organized into the areas of livable communities, mobility, human capital, and governance. It also contains links to pages on CMAP's website where more information can be found.

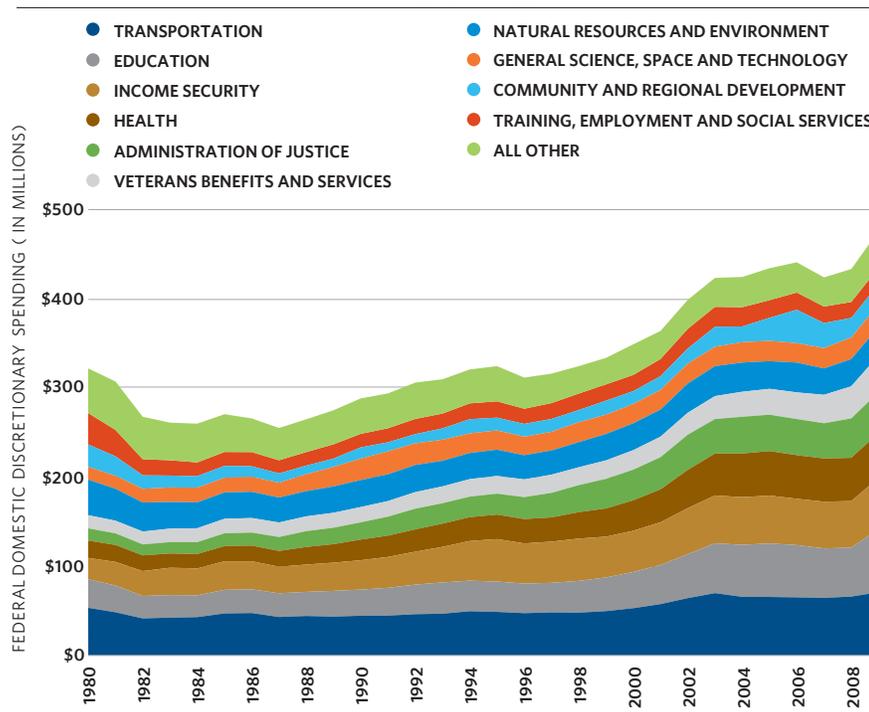
How Federal Decisions Affect Plan Implementation

The federal government is critical to the success of GO TO 2040. It must decide how to allocate billions in taxpayer dollars annually across a variety of different programs, services, and projects. It also must set priorities and develop criteria for how funding should flow through to the state, regional, and local levels.

Federal leadership is vital not only to the process of regional planning, but to its eventual success at implementing real change on the ground in our communities.

Over \$500 billion annually is spent by the federal government on domestic discretionary programs — expenditures other than national defense and international affairs or mandatory programs like Social Security and Medicare. Large domestic discretionary items include transportation, education, income security (made up largely of housing assistance), community and regional development, and natural resources and environment spending. Historical federal spending is shown in **Figure 67** below.

Figure 67. Federal domestic discretionary spending, 1980-2009



Measured in 2005 constant dollars
 Source: Budget of the United States Government, FY 2010, Table 8.8

While dollar amounts in this chart shed light on federal funding priorities, the mechanisms for how these dollars flow may be even more important. States and local governments usually comprise the “delivery systems” for many of these programs and services, and they often retain a high degree of discretion over where the funding should eventually flow. Transportation, the largest federal domestic discretionary spending item, exemplifies this arrangement — the federal government sets the policy framework through numerous programs, appropriates the funds from these programs through to states using varying criteria, and then allows states a fair degree of discretion in terms of project selection.

The federal government also provides the context, direction, and funding for most planning and decision making on the metropolitan scale. The regional transportation process, including the requirement of a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), is a federal initiative. More recently, the federal government has stressed the importance of regional comprehensive plans as vehicles for driving investment decisions. The degree to which plans like GO TO 2040 can be implemented will be influenced by future federal investment, guidance and policy decisions. Overall, the federal government can help to implement GO TO 2040 by actions such as:

Placing a high priority on investing in metropolitan regions like northeastern Illinois, as central building blocks for increasing the nation’s overall economic prosperity.

Emphasizing holistic solutions to multidimensional problems like congestion and climate change by supporting interagency coordination and the implementation of comprehensive plans.

Continuing to make smart investments in our nation’s infrastructure systems, to protect our most vital natural resources like the Great Lakes, and to make the kinds of education and workforce investments that drive innovation, supporting regional and national economic prosperity.

The federal government has already emphasized comprehensive approaches to creating more sustainable and livable communities by coalescing what are typically compartmentalized grant programs from agencies like the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). While these agencies have historically pursued often different (and sometimes divergent) goals, more coordinated investment decisions harnessing the connections among transportation, land use, housing, and environment should further the goal of more livable, sustainable communities.

Livable Communities

The federal government can play a catalytic role in supporting investment decisions consistent with GO TO 2040's emphasis on livable communities. While efforts across the areas of land use, housing, resource conservation, and open space will be largely implemented by localities, the federal government can help through targeted funding and other support.

Land Use and Housing

An important federal role in the areas of land use and housing is to support community planning strategies primarily through funding support, like block grants, matching grants, and other assistance. The federal government can also play a major role in expanding economic opportunities and providing decent housing in disadvantaged communities, including stabilizing communities whose viability has been damaged by foreclosures. Targeted federal assistance can help state and local governments, nonprofits, and developers collaborate to acquire land and property, rehabilitate abandoned properties, and offer financial assistance to low- to middle-income homebuyers. GO TO 2040 specifically recommends that the federal government target its housing investments in ways that align with public transit.

While project implementation is done at the local level, federal dollars are often vital for moving complex projects along. They often require vast tracts of land containing many parcels, which can be cost prohibitive to developers. Federal funding can be particularly helpful for remediating **brownfields**, vacant and contaminated properties that can create serious barriers to community reinvestment opportunities. Nine different federal agencies administer brownfield remediation programs, including the U.S. EPA and HUD, which offer funds for activities including planning, environmental assessments, and technical assistance to direct funding for clean-up activities at certain properties.



The Village of Oak Park used federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Home Investment Partnership Program funds from HUD to fund a single-family rehabilitation program. The program serves low and very low-income homeowners by helping them maintain their homes at safe and desirable standards while preserving the Village's housing stock. Image courtesy of Eric Rogers



In 1997, Chicago was chosen as one of the first "Showcase Communities" for a brownfields initiative that coordinated resources of over 15 federal agencies to address local cleanup and reuse issues. U.S. EPA funds were leveraged with other grants, including one from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), to clear a brownfield site of more than 600,000 tons of concrete which was then used in city infrastructure projects. Since 2002, the site has been home to the Chicago Center for Green Technology, the most comprehensive green design educational resource in the Midwest. The building itself is a prime example of green design. Image courtesy of Flickr user [Andrew Ciscel](#)

Resource Conservation

GO TO 2040 focuses its recommendations primarily on local and regional actions to reduce energy and water consumption. However, since environmental issues cross local, regional, and state borders, the federal government has a vital role to play. **Climate change** is perhaps the most significant global threat facing present and future generations. Climate change necessitates not only serious debate about matters of federal regulation (such as fuel economy standards), taxation (such as imposing a tax on carbon) and innovative market mechanisms for mitigating carbon emissions (such as “cap and trade” systems), but also the incentives built into existing federal transportation, housing, and energy policies. The federal government can set national targets, by sector or by jurisdiction, for reducing greenhouse gas reductions and supporting particular strategies for its achievement.

National targets would be an important first step for combating climate change, and should help raise the profile of comprehensive plans like GO TO 2040, which identify a range of strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Local challenges vary across the U.S., so the federal government should allow regions latitude to implement the most relevant local strategies to attain the targets.

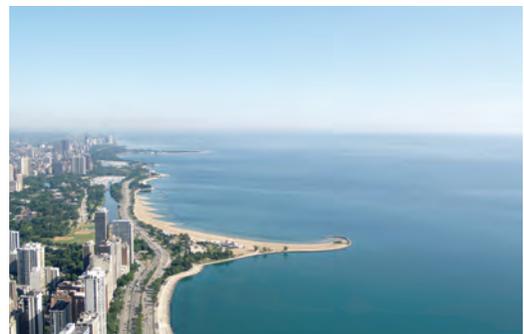
The federal government can provide local and regional funding assistance for communities to reduce energy consumption in buildings through **retrofits**. It can also redouble efforts to transition away from centralized electricity generation with inefficient long-distance transmission and toward smaller-scale, decentralized generation, and the “smart grid.” This will enable better demand management, and more intelligent utilization of capacity. The federal government can also invest in and provide incentives for research, production, and transmission of clean energy technologies and **alternative fuels** to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Great Lakes hold about 20 percent of the world’s available fresh surface water, provide an important shipping route from the Midwest to the east coast and beyond, and support recreational boating and commercial fishing in addition to a rich ecosystem. Yet the Great Lakes are beset by numerous threats including invasive species, water level declines, and ongoing and legacy pollution. The federal government can support the restoration of the Great Lakes through clean-up of legacy contamination, reduction of non-point contamination sources, and promotion of green infrastructure. The federal government has a significant role in the control of invasive species, and should also facilitate full implementation of the Great Lakes Compact, which will ensure a cooperative, performance-based investment process that balances ecological and economic goals.

The federal government plays a large role in managing and protecting our region’s **waterways**, particularly commercial corridors like the Calumet River and the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, and our region’s ports, which include the Calumet, Chicago, and Waukegan harbors. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for maintaining large parts of the infrastructure at these harbors. This includes responsibilities such as maintaining structural integrity of breakwaters and dredging approach and harbor channels.



In October, 2009, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) awarded an Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) led consortium \$8 million in funding to support wind-energy research facilities. The funds will be used to construct a test wind turbine in Marseilles, Illinois to discover techniques for making turbines more effective and efficient. Also, IIT will offer a number of educational opportunities to students interested in pursuing careers in the field of wind energy engineering. IIT was also awarded \$5 million in April 2010 to develop and institute courses and certificate programs for smart grid technology. The grant will fund a Smart Grid Education and Workforce Training Center, which is expected to train 49,000 employees from the power industry, union workers, teachers, and students over three years. Photo courtesy of iStockphoto.com



In February 2010, the U.S. EPA earmarked \$2.2 billion for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) over the next 5 years — \$475 million of which has been approved in President Obama’s FY 2010 budget. GLRI was created to target the most significant problems that plague the Great Lakes, including invasive aquatic species, non-point source pollution, and contaminated sediment. In 2010, \$250 million in grants will be available to fund a variety of projects aimed at achieving the GLRI’s goals. Image courtesy of Flickr user kendoman26

Open Space

The federal government should support direct investment in open space, particularly to preserve large “macrosites.” This can happen through formation of national wildlife refuges, or the transfer of surplus federal property to open space uses, as occurred at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie and Fort Sheridan.

Local Food

GO TO 2040 identifies a variety of actions by the federal government that would support local food production and improved access to food. The federal government subsidizes various forms of agricultural production and also sponsors **agricultural preservation** programs, which fund the purchase of easements. The federal government can support local food production by providing the tools and resources necessary to ensure that its farmland preservation investments and general agricultural subsidies promote viable local food systems.

The federal government can support a variety of demonstration programs to evaluate different means of providing better food access in “food deserts,” including funding these efforts and communicating best practices. Federal financing assistance to spur private investment in supermarkets in underserved areas is specifically recommended in the local food section. Also, support for linking hunger assistance programs and local food production would benefit both systems.

Human Capital

The federal government can also play a role in supporting education, workforce development and economic innovation. Our region's future economic prosperity requires attentiveness to a supportive business environment, particularly through attracting and retaining a skilled workforce that can fill the job demands of the 21st Century.

Education and Workforce Development

Education and workforce development are major federal expenditures, and GO TO 2040 supports the efforts of various education stakeholders. The plan calls for the federal government to increase the flexibility of federal funding for workforce development programs and allowing funding recipients to create more locally-specific, effective programs.

Economic Innovation

Economic innovation, the development and commercialization of new products and processes, is a key driver of economic performance. Recent federal programs and policies have recognized the fact that regions are the drivers of our nation's economy. Investing in regional economic **innovation** is gaining importance in federal policy as a way to support economic growth. Federal financing can harness the power of regional **industry clusters** and help transition start-up firms from incubator programs into the business world.

Some of the best opportunities for economic growth in the next decade are in emerging green industries that are building on existing capacity in the region, such as the manufacturing of components for wind turbines or solar panels by metal manufacturers who are already producing similar products. By growing "**green jobs**" in metropolitan regions and elsewhere, the U.S. can create a competitive advantage in this growing economic sector. The federal government can lead the way in financing major research and development projects involving green technology, supporting **workforce development** programs to train or retrain the workforce for specialized skills in a new green economy, and introducing programs or regulations to implement clean energy technologies and alternative fuels. These types of assistance can spur private-sector and university-driven innovation.



The Advanced Research Projects Agency - Energy (ARPA-E) was established within DOE to fund projects to develop technologies that reduce energy related emissions and improve energy efficiency. Nalco Company, based in Naperville, received \$2.2 million to capture and desorb carbon from smokestacks of coal-fired plants. Image courtesy of Nalco Company

Efficient Governance

The GO TO 2040 plan also stresses the importance of governance, and the federal government has a particular role in addressing coordinated investment.

Coordinated Investment

GO TO 2040 recommends increased coordination across government agencies, with a particular focus on the federal level. The federal government can continue to emphasize coordination across different agencies and continue to support the implementation of regional comprehensive plans. Increased alignment in goals, priorities, and grant requirements across different agencies like U.S. DOT, HUD, and U.S. EPA will promote comprehensive solutions to our most pressing problems and minimize duplication of effort or competing regulations and objectives.

When the federal government speaks with “one voice” on issues like transportation, housing, and environmental policy, it can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our investment decisions, which bolsters our regional economy and strengthens our communities.



In June 2009, U.S. DOT, HUD, and U.S. EPA joined forces to promote affordable housing with more transit options while protecting the environment. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities will coordinate investment based on a set of livability principles, including the integration of housing, transportation, water infrastructure, and land use planning and investment. HUD is funding a \$150 million Sustainable Communities Initiative for regional planning efforts that incorporate housing and transportation development together. Image courtesy of Flickr user [cjhumphrey1](#)

Regional Mobility

GO TO 2040 emphasizes the importance of federal funding and regulations in enhancing regional mobility.

Transportation Finance

The federal government allocates large amounts of funding for the purposes of maintaining, modernizing and expanding our highway and transit networks. The federal government can support GO TO 2040's vision for transportation by emphasizing sustainable revenue sources, directing investments toward regional priorities, and using performance-driven criteria for more transparent, outcome-based decisions. It can support the efforts of regions to evaluate and prioritize local infrastructure investments in a comprehensive way that looks beyond transportation benefits to include land use, economic, environmental, and other impacts. The federal government can also continue to emphasize strategies which enhance safety and security for all users on expressways, arterials, transit, and local roads.

Moving toward more sustainable revenue sources for transportation may require a stronger emphasis on user fees and other “pay as you drive” strategies not simply to raise revenue, but to strengthen the public's willingness to support infrastructure investment and to mitigate the continuing problems of congestion on our roads.

The federal government can continue to support **pricing and managed facilities** including congestion pricing, dedicated lanes, high occupancy toll lanes (HOTs), as well as technologies and other **travel demand management** strategies that can achieve travel congestion reduction and other related benefits, such as reduced travel delay and hours of travel, greater use of transit and rideshare participation, improved safety, improved air quality, improved quality of life, and enhanced economic activity. The federal government should also explore potential long-term replacements for the federal gas tax, such as vehicle miles traveled (VMT) fees; these require exploration and action at the federal level to be feasible.



The federal government has cited the reduction of diesel emissions as a high national priority. In the Chicago region, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) funds have been used to do CSX locomotive repowers, retrofit Chicago Public School buses, and purchase hybrid electric buses for the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA). Other CMAQ funded projects include car sharing programs, clean air campaigns, bicycle facilities, and railroad grade separations. Image courtesy of Flickr user [Carl Farbman](#)

Public Transit

Federal funding for the maintenance, enhancement, and expansion of our region's **public transit** remains of vital importance. Public transit is highly valued by northeastern Illinois residents, and modernization of the system is a key recommendation of GO TO 2040. Capital needs continue to outpace available capital revenues, and the system faces a large backlog of deferred maintenance, which impacts service across the region. The use of federal funds for rehabilitation, reconstruction, and improvement projects — rather than just new capacity — is critically important to a region with major supplies of older transit infrastructure, as ours has. GO TO 2040 recommends specifically that the federal government should reform the New Starts funding source in line with these priorities.

The federal government can also provide funding to support **high-speed rail**, supporting the region's place as the center of the Midwest high speed rail network. This should be in addition to, not in place of, federal funds that already flow to metropolitan areas; investment in high-speed rail should not come at the expense of investment in the region's existing transit infrastructure.

Freight

As a key function of our transportation system, **freight** deserves special attention due to its tremendous impact in terms of jobs and economic growth. A federal intermodal freight policy can address the efficient movement of goods, and federal resources can be directed to the projects where freight has the greatest national benefit. National freight infrastructure and policies should continue to stress innovation, including the use of state-of-the-art **intelligent transportation system** (ITS) technologies. An overarching federal policy concerning freight would provide valuable guidance as regions attempt to confront freight challenges, many of which are national in their scope. GO TO 2040 specifically identifies the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE) as an important regional priority, and one which should receive strong federal support due to its impact on freight movements, not just in the region but across the nation.



The CTA \$530 million Brown Line Capacity Expansion project received \$423.1 million in federal funding (\$245.5 million in New Starts funding and \$177.6 million in formula funds) through the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). The Federal Transit Administration's New Starts program funds capital construction projects for transit systems and provides full funding grant agreements (FFGAs) if the projects are locally planned, implemented, and operated. This project included lengthening CTA station platforms to accommodate eight-car trains, upgrading operating equipment, and rebuilding stations to make them compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Image courtesy of [Craighton Berman](#)



The Electric Freight Management (EFM) project, sponsored by U.S. DOT, uses advanced information technology and web services to coordinate freight shipping and enable better supply chain communications to public and private operators. U.S. DOT will create data dictionary and tracking device standards using International Standards Organizations (ISO). The information would be deployable across different modes, and would help reduce delays. Over 40 percent of time in the shipping supply chain is spent awaiting information exchanges. An intelligent transportation system like EFM could significantly reduce freight congestion. Image courtesy of [Laurence Pearlman](#)

State government

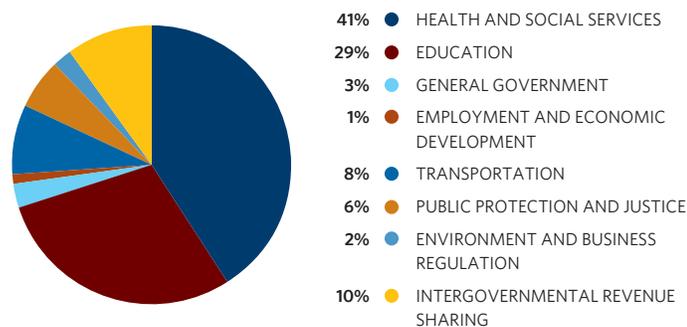
The State of Illinois' provision of services, infrastructure, and funding greatly impacts residents and businesses across the metropolitan Chicago region. This section describes how state decisions affect plan implementation, and then provides a description of actions that could support the implementation of GO TO 2040, organized into the areas of community planning, transportation, environment, and policy. It contains links to pages on CMAP's website where more information can be found.

How State Decisions Affect Plan Implementation

The State of Illinois allocates nearly \$50 billion per year across a variety of program areas (see **Figure 68**). In FY 2009, roughly one tenth of this total consisted of federal funds.

The largest sources of state revenue remain the sales tax and income tax, which generated roughly \$23 billion in 2009. The largest spending areas are health and human services and education, which together make up over 70 percent of all state expenditures. The state plays a significant role in operating and maintaining the transportation system, promoting economic development, and maintaining and preserving natural resources.

Figure 68. State of Illinois expenditures, 2008



Source: Illinois Comptroller, 2008 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

GO TO 2040 stresses the importance of investment decisions that will enhance economic vitality and livability across northeastern Illinois. State decisions will have a major impact on the implementation of GO TO 2040, not simply because of the sheer magnitude of the expenditures. More important is how decisions are prioritized and targeted. In practice the state must make important investment choices every day, such as which roads to resurface or reconstruct, which businesses to attract or retain, and which open space or other natural resource elements to preserve or restore.

Across these types of policy areas, GO TO 2040 stresses the importance of performance driven criteria when making investment decisions. Criteria that emphasize economic impact and job creation as well as economic and environmental sustainability and quality of life can propel the region and state toward the twin objectives of economic vitality and more livable communities. The extent to which the state emphasizes these factors, whether making an investment in a highway, wastewater treatment plant, or workforce development program, will affect the outcomes achieved.

Another important element stressed by GO TO 2040 is the coordination of investment across governmental agencies. Expenditures made by one department can often generate undesired consequences requiring attention from another department or different unit of government. For example, transportation expenditures can have a number of both positive and negative land use, environmental, and economic consequences. Coordination across state agencies in terms of goal-setting and evaluation criteria can help maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of these investments.

The State of Illinois allocates large dollars across diverse areas, including education, public health, transportation, economic development, and the environment. In many cases, the state has wide discretion in terms of how and where dollars, both federal and state, get spent. One of the chief messages of GO TO 2040 is that careful targeting of expenditures, via the use of better data and performance driven criteria, can achieve better results. In addition, investments should be comprehensive in scope and reflect linkages among different areas like transportation, housing, and the environment. By pursuing these types of objectives, the state can help foster a strong economy and other good quality-of-life outcomes for our residents and businesses.

Livable Communities

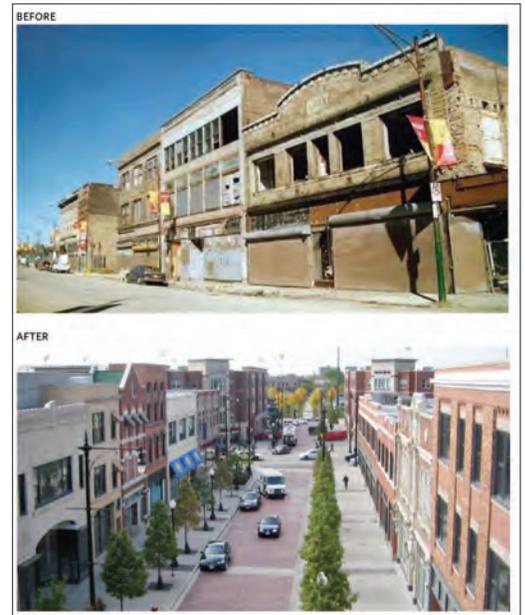
The state can play an important role in implementing GO TO 2040's recommendations for livable communities, which address land use and housing, resource conservation, open space, and local food, primarily through supportive policies and targeted funding support.

Land Use and Housing

GO TO 2040 identifies a role for the state in helping to catalyze well planned, **walkable communities** by supporting the connections between transportation and land use when making investment decisions. More coordinated investment among transportation, environmental, and housing expenditures can go a long way toward ameliorating some of the unintended consequences that can sometimes occur when policy areas are evaluated separately. For example, transportation funds can be programmed with land use and environmental considerations in mind. As the federal government begins to increase its support for livable communities through more comprehensive investment decisions, the state can also play a vital role by aligning investment choices in this manner.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) is highly engaged in issues of **brownfield** remediation and redevelopment. IEPA's Site Remediation Program (SRP) provides participants the opportunity to receive IEPA review, technical assistance, and the guarantee that the participant has successfully demonstrated the mitigation of significant risk. The state also offers other financial assistance programs, which can bolster efforts by local governments and the private sector. Many successful brownfields projects rely upon a mixture of funding and government services, and a high level of state involvement will continue to leverage other sources and spur important redevelopment efforts.

In recent years, northeastern Illinois has experienced increasing housing costs in tandem with decreasing real incomes. This has left the region a surplus of newly built, high-cost, ownership housing stock. **Housing preservation** strategies can reduce housing costs and maintain the uniqueness of our communities. Preservation of housing can also have greater returns for the region's economy than demolition and new construction in terms of units and jobs created. The state can play a major role encouraging and incentivizing housing preservation through policies and programs that encourage maintenance of existing housing stock, and can prioritize state housing funding in areas near transit, or to communities engaging in intergovernmental planning. For example, the Illinois Housing Development Agency (IHDA) commits various funding sources and low interest loans to assist developers and local governments in the acquisition and rehabilitation of existing housing. A specific focus for IHDA is achieving housing preservation for seniors as well as low income and working class families.



Near the heart of Chicago, next to the Dan Ryan Expressway and the University of Illinois — Chicago (UIC) campus, a livable community was created. The university and a private developer worked closely with the IEPA through SRP, together developing a dynamic collaboration that transformed 68 acres of deteriorating and mostly abandoned industrial, commercial, and residential facilities, into the new University Village, featuring student housing, academic buildings, family homes, and over 50 new shops and restaurants. Twenty-one percent of the community's new residences have been designated as affordable housing and 30 percent of the land devoted to green space. Generating new economic activity in this underutilized area near downtown, the project has created over 600 new permanent jobs and spurred further residential development in the surrounding area. Image courtesy of [UIC and CDM](#)

Resource Conservation

The state can actively address issues related to resource conservation, including the region's **water supply**, which requires careful planning and management. Integration of land use and resource conservation planning can play a central role in achieving better conservation of water. Planning grant programs can assist local governments in incorporating resource conservation measures. Conservation-oriented rate structures and rules and regulations encouraging graywater and wastewater reuse can be pursued. As the administrator of the state revolving funds for **wastewater** treatment plants, the IEPA can also prioritize the use of some of these funds for utilities demonstrating conservation targets.

The state can use a watershed management approach to improve water quality and protect against flooding by continuing to fund watershed planning. Many of these plans have been developed in the region using funding available from IEPA under the federal Clean Water Act, yet there are numerous watersheds where they have not. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) also sponsors flood studies. Watershed plans should identify water resource problems and evaluate projects and policies to address them, whether the problem is flooding or poor water quality or loss of habitat. Ideally a watershed plan will consider multi-objective projects that address several problems simultaneously. Of equal importance is putting funding toward the implementation of project recommendations in watershed plans, such as **stormwater best management practices** including the use of green infrastructure.

IEPA also regulates the region's **solid waste** facilities and requires all Illinois counties and the City of Chicago to develop, adopt and implement 20 year municipal waste management plans. Plans must set recycling targets, identify changes, and evaluate progress. The state can help by requiring improved reporting on quantity of waste disposed and remaining capacity of facilities. It can also implement waste reduction policies and conduct further research and policy development with the goal of setting specific targets by sector.



The North Branch of the Chicago River encompasses nearly 100 square miles in Cook and Lake counties, comprising a total watershed area of over 60,000 acres. Twenty-five municipalities fall within the watershed boundary, all contributing to an assortment of agricultural, commercial, and residential development that has taken place on open land throughout the watershed. As a result of this development, areas within the watershed have experienced flood damage, and overall water quality and wildlife habitats have been tarnished. The North Branch of the Chicago River Watershed-Based Plan was developed by the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission to "provide direction and target resources for better management and restoration of the watershed." The plan allows for the coordination of watershed planning efforts between multiple governmental jurisdictions. In addition, the plan makes individual communities and other water planning entities more responsible for their impact on the North Branch of the Chicago River Watershed. Image courtesy of [Jim Watkins](#)

Open Space

The state operates and maintains large quantities of **open space** throughout northeastern Illinois. IDNR has been the leader in open space acquisition and has greatly helped the region in achieving various parks and open lands objectives. The state also provides funding through various grant programs to county forest preserves and local governments for acquiring and managing parks and open lands. As recent budgetary cuts and diversions have restricted IDNR from carrying out these important tasks, the state can help by reinstating funding to ensure that the state would continue to meet the need for open space that arises from an increasing population.

Furthermore, the state can help support GO TO 2040 through prioritization of lands most important from a natural resources perspective. Beyond open space investment, the state can also use its regulatory authority over sewer service expansion and its investment in transportation infrastructure to further protect sensitive open space.



Chain O'Lakes State Park is the largest and most visited natural area maintained by the State of Illinois. Adjacent to the 15 lakes and 45 miles of river that make up the public waters of the Fox Chain O'Lakes, the park contains a 44-acre inland lake, as well as camping facilities, horseback riding, fishing, and hunting opportunities. It is well-known as the only free access for launching thousands of powerboats each season on the Chain O'Lakes. Image courtesy of [Jim Watkins](#)

Local Food

The state has an important role to play in both the production of local food and food access. Recent state legislation encourages state institutions (such as schools, prisons, hospitals, and others) to purchase local foods. This can bolster the **economy for local foods** by providing a consistent, large-scale market.

The issue of **hunger** and food security continues to be a major issue of concern in our region and across the state. The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) administer and/or oversee many of the nutrition and hunger-relief programs that operate in Illinois. Better alignment of government agencies and services across the region and state can enhance program delivery around the needs of individuals and families. In addition, the use of technology and better data and information systems can streamline programs and services and make it easier for residents to apply and renew for certain services.



IDHS offers financial assistance for low income seniors and families to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables through the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. Checks and nutrition education materials, including recipes, are distributed through Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) clinics and at local senior citizens' centers through the Illinois Department on Aging and other local organizations. Checks for fresh fruits and vegetables can be used at farmers' markets in 34 counties across the state and served over 85,000 participants during 2009. Image courtesy of Flickr user [Jim Watkins](#)

Human Capital

GO TO 2040 stresses the importance of a skilled workforce, and offers recommendations in the areas of economic innovation and education and workforce development. The state has a central role to play in supporting strategies for our continued economic vitality.

In addition, providing for the health of our residents, particularly those of lower incomes, will remain a high priority. Investments in people will help build and maintain strong communities, improve quality of life, and generate high economic returns. Whether as a funder, policy maker, or direct provider of services, the state has large responsibilities in many of these areas.

Economic Innovation

State agencies like the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) can enhance technology transfer and commercialization by linking research institutions with private sector industries. The state can increase funding opportunities like challenge grants and venture capital funds, and target **economic development incentives** toward the attraction and retention of innovative industries with good, high-paying jobs, including **green jobs**, which are becoming increasingly important for our region's sustained economic prosperity. The state can remove barriers to innovation through regulatory reform and create a culture of innovation through publicizing examples of innovation success stories and convening events that foster collaboration between the public and private sector.

Education and Workforce Development

Effective **education** is key to sustaining a productive workforce, an engaged citizenry, and a high quality of life. Like other states, Illinois makes large expenditures toward schools, from pre-kindergarten to community colleges to the university system. The state can help support the goals of GO TO 2040 particularly by ensuring that these expenditures are achieving the desired outcomes of higher educational attainment and preparing our residents for the jobs of tomorrow.

The state has many potential opportunities for improving the educational system. Developing a pre-kindergarten through grade 20 (P-20) agenda can further the common goals of improving academic achievement, increasing college access and success, improving use of existing data and measurements, developing improved accountability, promoting lifelong learning, easing the transition to college, and reducing remediation. Improved data systems will allow schools to quickly identify the needs of incoming students, including the important measure of kindergarten readiness, and monitor progress as they move to the next level. The state can also work to strengthen teacher leadership through more focus on graduate coursework and credentialing in the content areas so teachers can take on distributed leadership roles in schools around the issue of instruction.



In December 2009, the Illinois' Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) tax credit program was expanded to include auto manufacturers. The program now allows companies in the auto industry, one of the state's largest employers, to retain employee income tax withholdings and reinvest them for operations that will create more jobs. The Ford Motor Company added 1,200 new jobs at its Chicago manufacturing facilities, where a next-generation SUV is being produced. The new vehicle will have at least 25 percent better fuel economy than its predecessor. Image courtesy of ChristyNelson.net

Workforce development programs also can have a significant role in sustaining economic growth by providing an important intermediary function in the labor market. State agencies like DCEO, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and IDHS provide funds and services for job training, job placement, trade adjustment assistance, adult education services, and assistance to local businesses. The sheer complexity of the workforce development system can be strengthened through more coordination and better information networks to track, measure, and analyze performance.

Other Actions That Support Human Capital

Health and social services typically comprise the largest expenditure of state dollars. The state has a vital role in ensuring that these dollars are well spent and achieving desired outcomes. State agencies like the Illinois Department of Public Health can help link planning for the design and implementation of prevention and health promotion strategies to planning in other sectors. It can also improve data for integrated planning and monitoring, and design programs for developing the workforce for the health care field, which continues to be a high growth industry in northeastern Illinois. The state can also create a coordinated, statewide **211 system** for human services provision, which can improve efficiency of service delivery.



The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and its Education Partners are in the process of developing and rolling out a state-wide Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS). Once fully deployed, the system will collect and provide data to track student outcomes from Pre-Kindergarten through postsecondary education, and as students enter the workforce. This is designed to guide policy decision on the investment of time and energy to improve student achievement. Once completed, ILDS will serve a large stakeholder group of local, regional, and state groups, including ISBE, postsecondary institutions, research organizations, and state workforce and higher education agencies, among others. Photo courtesy of [iStockphoto.com](#)



The ICCB launched Shifting Gears in 2006 with the Joyce Foundation to help low-skilled and low-wage workers gain additional education and skill development services, gain postsecondary credentials, and eventually move into better jobs. This program has focused specifically on improving, or in some cases creating, bridge programs that combine fundamental academic skills with occupational education. The bridge programs are targeted on the industry sectors of manufacturing, health care, and transportation/distribution/logistics. The Joyce Foundation funded similar initiatives in five other Midwest states. Image courtesy of Flickr user [Yooperrann](#)

Efficient Governance

GO TO 2040 also emphasizes state action in the areas of tax policy, access to information, and coordinated investment.

Tax Policy

GO TO 2040 discusses the state's role in taxation, and its overall fiscal health, at some length. Nearly 85 percent of state own-source revenue comes from the state sales tax, individual income tax, and corporate income tax. In recent years, the state has increasingly faced large budget deficits, and growth in expenditures continues to outpace revenues. The state's retirement system is one major driver of this deficit. Pension reform and careful targeting of state expenditures should help strengthen the state's fiscal situation, which will have a ripple effect in strengthening the ability of the state to provide infrastructure and services across many sectors. The state's income and corporate income tax rates remain quite low, relative to other U.S. states. Lastly, the sales tax continues to be imposed on goods, but not on consumer services. Extending the sales tax to services can help broaden the tax base, and allow for additional revenues and/or the lowering of sales tax rates.

Beyond budget balancing matters, the state's tax system remains inextricably linked with land use and the overall economy. The state allocates over \$4 billion annually in revenue sharing to local governments in northeastern Illinois — a large portion of this amount is composed of sales tax sharing, which creates incentives for particular local land use decisions. The state can help support GO TO 2040 by examining the outcomes of these systems. Increased transparency and predictability of state tax systems also will create a better environment for residents and to continue to make the state and region attractive for businesses. GO TO 2040 specifically recommends the formation of a task force on tax and fiscal issues to be housed at CMAP which will make recommendations for action to the state.

Access to Information

GO TO 2040 emphasizes improved sharing of data and transparency by all levels of government, including the state. Almost all state agencies control large amounts of data and information. Policy challenges cannot be solved — and efficient government operations cannot be achieved — without comprehensive, current, and accurate data resources.

Coordinated Investments

GO TO 2040 also addresses the importance of coordinating funding programs and regulations by both the federal and state government. Beyond the various actions already noted above, the state can also support efforts by local governments, counties, and COGs to increase service coordination, or in some cases consolidation, by units of local government.

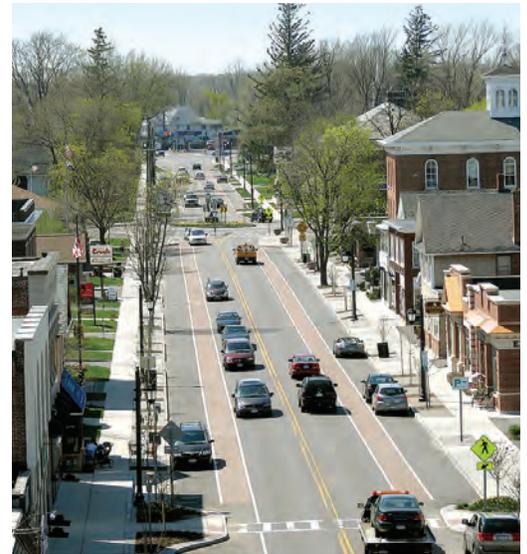
Regional Mobility

The state's transportation agencies — defined for the purposes of this section as the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Illinois Tollway — are targets of a number of GO TO 2040's recommendations regarding regional mobility, including those related to transportation finance, major capital projects, public transit, and freight.

Transportation Finance

GO TO 2040 emphasizes efficient and fair decision-making concerning transportation expenditures and also an increase in transportation funding, relying on several new or expanded sources. Many recommendations in this section are directed to IDOT and the Tollway, which operate and maintain over 3,100 miles of roadway in northeastern Illinois. Their regular activities include the resurfacing and reconstruction of roads, bridges, and interchanges, signal timing, and a variety of other engineering and planning work. This is a massive and complex undertaking, requiring large outlays of federal and state dollars. The federal and state gas tax, state motor vehicle registration fees, and toll revenues are the primary revenue sources for funding the operations and maintenance of the state highway system. Roughly every 10 years, the State of Illinois has provided a state capital funding package, financed largely through bonds and other fee increases, to supplement highway, transit, and other infrastructure projects. The state also provides some additional funding for the region's transit system — this makes up only a small component of total transit funding and the state does not play a direct role in transit operations or maintenance.

As a major transportation implementer, the state can help support GO TO 2040 in a variety of ways. Given the realities of constrained federal and state revenues and the sheer magnitude of maintenance and enhancement needs, the state can help develop and utilize transparent evaluation criteria for the selection of road projects, rather than arbitrary geographic funding splits — such as the current practice that only 45 percent of the state's highway money is spent within the region. Criteria can be expanded to include measures of transportation performance as well as land use, environmental, and economic measures. Furthermore, state elected officials can move towards more sustainable funding sources for transportation. This may require attention to increasing the capacity of the state motor fuel tax (MFT) in the short term, and moving toward other, more adequate, user fees over the long term as vehicles move toward **alternative fuels**. GO TO 2040 specifically recommends the use of congestion pricing on selected expressways, with some of the revenues devoted to improving parallel transit service as well as nearby arterials. In addition, **public private partnerships (PPP)** offer a range of different approaches for funding infrastructure improvements and operations. The state currently lacks the necessary enabling legislation to enter into these types of arrangements.



With the recent adoption of Complete Street's legislation, IDOT is now pursuing the construction of accessible bicycle and pedestrian facilities with the reconstruction of any state road. Complete Streets emphasizes designing roadways for use by all modes, including bicycle and pedestrian considerations. Complete streets balance safety and convenience for all users, and improve walkability and livability of an area. According to the new legislation, IDOT will assume more of the financial burden of these facilities — including utility and right-of-way costs. Previously, projects were funded with a 50 percent state contribution and a 50 percent local match, but the new breakdown will only require a 20 percent local contribution to the 80 percent state share for the construction of sidewalks and off-road facilities. Image courtesy of [Dan Burden](#)

Major Capital Projects

GO TO 2040 identifies a number of recommended major transportation capital projects, including a number sponsored by IDOT and the Tollway. These agencies should pursue these projects as priorities, noting the specific recommendations concerning support for transit, as well as community and environmental mitigation and enhancement activities, that are contained in that section.

Public Transit

The state currently contributes some funds to the region's transit system, and can explore additional innovative funding sources, such as **congestion pricing**, that can also support regional transit. Also, IDOT and the Tollway can continue their efforts to support multimodal travel options by incorporating Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Arterial Rapid Transit (ART) concepts into planning and design of roadway improvements.

Freight

The state is among the most important agencies involved in freight. In terms of infrastructure investments, the state can prioritize the implementation of the CREATE rail improvement project, both by focusing state investment in this project and helping to seek additional federal funds. Truck traffic in the region is also quite important, and the state can take a leadership role in identifying opportunities for dedicated freight corridors and implementing truckways or similar facilities where appropriate. A major element of GO TO 2040's approach to freight is the establishment of a regional freight authority to prioritize and finance freight improvements; the state should take an active role in the formation of this group.

Other Actions That Support Regional Mobility

IDOT and the Tollway operate and maintain the region's expressways. A large portion of this system is frequently congested. A range of **managed lanes** strategies can optimize travel flow and reduce congestion, by reducing excessive traffic volumes, reducing conflicts between vehicles, reducing the number of incidents, and better managing those incidents that occur. The most common managed lanes strategies are express lanes and reversible lanes, congestion pricing, high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes, and other supporting technologies and strategies. Many of these supporting strategies take the form of **intelligent transportation systems (ITS)** improvements, including variable message signage, overhead lane usage signal systems, variable speed limits, and video assisted enforcement.



Managed lanes such as express lanes and reversible lanes separate vehicles by trip destination and by vehicle type. Conflicts and weaving are minimized; capacity is optimized. Structural barriers are the primary means of assuring optimum system performance. In Chicago, IDOT maintains the reversible lanes on I-94, at the junction with I-90 to south of the loop. These lanes are switched during rush hour to mitigate peak demand periods. Express lane facilities typically serve passenger cars only and provide point-to-point service with a much lower frequency of access and egress points. Photo by Flickr user [HelveticaFanatic](#)

Transportation demand management (TDM) strategies can work in synergy with managed lanes. TDM comprises a group of strategies for reducing single occupancy vehicle use on the regional transportation network. One important subcomponent of TDM that can be implemented by state agencies is a range of traveler information strategies, including regional multimodal traveler information, itinerary route assistance, awareness campaigns, and construction congestion-mitigation. Coordinated systems of traveler information, such as 511 systems, can effectively transmit traveler information including construction advisories, up-to-the-minute congestion and travel time information, and incident information. Nationally, 511 is a number reserved for such traveler information.

The state also maintains a large portion of the region's arterials and collectors. Physical and operational improvements can improve capacity, improve travel time reliability and reduce crashes, while also reducing long-term costs. **Pavement design and pavement management systems** can facilitate better pavement conditions within constrained maintenance budgets. Careful planning of maintenance can preserve pavements, preventing them from falling into poor condition and requiring much more expensive rehabilitation or reconstruction later on. Other arterial operations strategies, such as **access management**, technologies, and other intersection operations can improve arterial and collector traffic flow, assuring mobility for all users, and providing unified access and circulation systems for businesses in commercial and mixed-use areas.

The state can also work toward ensuring mobility for all users in its maintenance and construction activities. Efforts to increase **bicycling** and walking as transportation and as recreation are important for reasons of mobility, health, safety, the environment, and the character of our communities. The state's recent passage of "complete streets" legislation requires: that bicycle and pedestrian travel ways be considered in the planning and development of facilities, that bicycles and pedestrians be accommodated when roads are built or rebuilt, and that IDOT establish design and construction standards for bicycle and pedestrian ways. Developing and maintaining bicycle facilities and programs can help improve the overall operation of the transportation system.



Pavement surfaces are a major component of our region's infrastructure and they can affect the safety, comfort, and cost of travel for users. IDOT currently collects data on both Interstate and non-Interstate pavements, and has historical data on Interstate pavement sections. The data, used as part of a pavement management system, helps state officials prioritize new projects, evaluate pavement design and construction, and answer hypothetical "what if" questions, all of which helps to manage our vast inventory of pavements. It has been estimated that Illinois' pavement management system has saved the state approximately \$50 million, since its inception in 1999. Image courtesy of Flickr user [Ignotus the Mage](#)

Regional authorities

This section is targeted to governmental organizations that work at the regional or metropolitan level. Many transportation organizations, including the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and the transit service boards including the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra, and Pace fit within this category. CMAP, as the region's metropolitan planning organization (MPO), also plays a major role in transportation planning and programming. It should be noted that other major transportation agencies such as the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Illinois Tollway are described in the state section of this chapter. Other nongovernmental groups that do work at the regional level, like civic organizations, philanthropic groups, or coalitions are described in the nongovernmental organizations section.

How Regional Decisions Affect Plan Implementation

A central purpose of GO TO 2040 is to explore the appropriate role of regional agencies in addressing our future economy and livability. While the region is the geographic level at which the economy functions, there is limited public sector decision-making at this level.

An exception involves transportation investment; the region's transit agencies are stand-alone units of government that operate across jurisdictions. The CMAP Board and the MPO Policy Committee, both of which are staffed by CMAP and operate under a memorandum of understanding, have responsibility for regional transportation planning and programming. The CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee track the use of local, state, and federal transportation funds and retain the ability to judge whether or not the allocation of federal and state monies align with regional priorities.

CMAP is the only metropolitan-scaled public sector agency in the region which is involved in issues beyond transportation. Historically, CMAP's role has included regional coordination, technical assistance to other units of government, and data collection, dissemination, and analysis. Shared priorities can be developed among other units of government through these efforts. In many areas — creating a network of green infrastructure, or supporting the region's economic specializations — CMAP can play an important role in coordinating among other units of government, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector. In the case of these examples, CMAP can lead projects and advance their implementation even without specific implementation authority.

There are also opportunities for regional agencies such as CMAP to take a broader role. This includes coordinating and leading local applications for federal or state funding in the areas of housing, energy efficiency, or others.

This section of the plan describes actions that can be undertaken at the regional level that would help to implement the plan, both by CMAP and by the transit agencies. It includes several case studies and best practices, and discusses the relationship of regional organizations to those that operate at the other levels of geography.

Livable Communities

Regional agencies largely have a supportive role, in implementing the recommendations of GO TO 2040 related to livable communities, including land use and housing, resource conservation, open space, and local food. They can also play important roles in providing assistance and support to local governments, who are the primary implementers of these types of recommendations.

Land Use and Housing

GO TO 2040 identifies a regional role for both CMAP and RTA in providing technical assistance and funding to support planning for livability at the local level. The plan specifically recommends providing funding to local governments for plans and ordinance updates, and coordinating regional funding programs to make it easy for municipalities and counties to receive and use these funds. Designating infrastructure improvement funds to be used to support planning for livable communities can be pursued as a next step to implement local plans. Regional agencies also can provide direct, non-financial technical assistance to local governments, or help to facilitate collaboration among communities in partnership with counties and Councils of Government (COGs).



In 2008, the Village of Mokena approved a Downtown Station Area Plan with support from and in coordination with Metra, RTA, and private consultants. The plan provides an analysis of urban design concepts to revitalize the area around their Metra commuter station. The plan includes historic preservation considerations and accommodation for bicycle and pedestrian access, as well as an analysis of market conditions and suitability for transit oriented development. By supporting communities' efforts to improve the area around transit hubs, the RTA stands to gain new riders and improve access to facilities. Image courtesy of Village of Mokena, HNTB

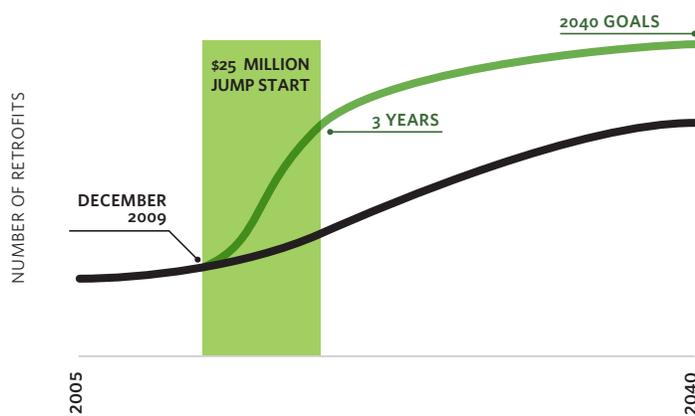
The link between transit, land use, and housing is a particularly important one for regional agencies to address. Local land use and infrastructure investments make a difference in the success of regional transit services. Regional agencies can identify opportunities for the application of transit oriented development (TOD), provide guidelines for how to plan to support transit, and consider supportive local actions when planning service changes. To support its transportation programming and project selection responsibilities, CMAP can continue to develop the analytical tools which evaluate these linkages, and the CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee can use comprehensive evaluation criteria to measure the performance of potential projects to support better regional decision-making.

Resource Conservation

GO TO 2040 identifies a role for CMAP in providing technical assistance and research, as well as some direct implementation in the areas of energy and water conservation. CMAP can create model ordinances for energy or water efficiency, offer assistance to communities in the application of full-cost pricing or other complex water conservation strategies, or offer other technical assistance and research support. The **Water 2050** regional plan provides additional specific recommendations for action.

Expansions in the traditional role of regional agencies can also be appropriate in many circumstances, particularly in new or emerging fields, or in response to state or federal opportunities. CMAP's work on the Regional Retrofit Ramp-up program, which involved a partnership with a number of local governments to receive federal funds to create a network supporting energy-efficiency retrofits, involves a direct implementation role for the agency.

Chicago Region Retrofit Ramp-up (CR3) accelerating the marketplace to value energy efficient buildings



In April 2010, CMAP was awarded \$25 million through the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) "Retrofit Ramp-up" Initiative for a collaboration with the City of Chicago, suburban counties and municipalities, the City of Rockford, and other stakeholders. This three-year grant will help create a sustainable market for building retrofits that will decrease participating property owners' energy bills by an average of 30 percent, while helping to reduce the region's energy footprint. CMAP anticipates that the grant will leverage an additional \$500 million in local investments, creating over 2,000 jobs and retrofitting 9,500 buildings in the region. From CMAP Library

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

Open Space

GO TO 2040 addresses open space at a variety of levels — conservation open space such as forest preserves, local open space such as parks, and connections between open space of all types. Regional agencies, namely CMAP, can play a role in setting regional priorities, helping to further protection of high-priority areas (though not by actually acquiring property itself), and specifically looking at environmental features that cross jurisdictional boundaries such as **waterways**.

The Green Infrastructure Vision (GIV) is an important initial step to set regional priorities for acquisition and **ecosystem restoration**. CMAP can work with land management organizations and other environmental groups to further refine the GIV, and then use the resulting product to guide investment decisions. Further refinement of the GIV would advance its implementation by making its recommendations more specific.

Beyond further refinement and prioritization, CMAP can take other actions to implement the GIV. It can use the refined GIV to inform its recommendations concerning sewer service expansions, and can ensure that transportation agencies are sensitive to high-priority protection and restoration areas as they pursue transportation projects. Also, collecting and publicizing regional data on open space preservation and the conditions of ecosystems would help to increase awareness and encourage good stewardship of valuable open space.

Regional agencies are also well-suited to address environmental features that cross jurisdictions, such as waterways. These can be addressed within the region by coordinating between counties, local governments, and other regulatory agencies on waterway use and protection, and also by coordinating beyond the boundaries of the region with other agencies in Wisconsin, Indiana, and elsewhere in Illinois. Much of the GIV is based around linear connections along waterways, so this approach would also help with its implementation.

Local Food

GO TO 2040 recommends a supportive role for CMAP in promoting sustainable local food, primarily involving convening food groups at the regional level, conducting research and analysis, and improving data availability to measure local food issues. Technical assistance to local governments seeking to include local food as part of their comprehensive plans or ordinances is also a relevant regional role.

Green Infrastructure Vision, Northeastern Illinois



The GIV was developed by Chicago Wilderness in partnership with a wide variety of other groups. It provides a regional-scale vision of important areas for protection or restoration across the region and beyond into neighboring states. Image courtesy of Chicago Wilderness

Human Capital

As a regional agency, CMAP can also play a role in addressing GO TO 2040's recommendations regarding human capital, including education and workforce development and economic innovation. CMAP's primary role includes research, data analysis and dissemination, and convening stakeholders who are active in this area.

Education and Workforce Development

GO TO 2040 directs most of its recommendations to organizations specializing in these fields, with a limited role for regional agencies like CMAP. An appropriate CMAP role involves collecting and providing improved data systems to better inform workforce, education, and economic development activities, and to help overcome the gaps in communication between these systems.

Economic Innovation

GO TO 2040 identifies actions that can be taken by the public sector to support innovation, which is an important contributor to our region's economy. CMAP can continue to research and study regional "**industry clusters**," or concentrations of interrelated firms. The region can organize economic development activities (such as workforce development) around these specializations. An emerging area of particular interest is the **green economy**, an economic sector of growing importance.

An important role for CMAP in supporting innovation is collecting and tracking related data. Innovation is notoriously difficult to measure; so is the green economy. An appropriate regional role involves collection, analysis, and dissemination of data, and this is underway through the Regional Indicators Project. Regional groups are also well-placed to organize coalitions among economic developers, universities and researchers, business organizations, and other groups to help obtain state and federal funding for initiatives related to innovation.

Efficient Governance

GO TO 2040 emphasizes the governance of our region, including tax policy, access to information, and coordinated investment. As one of the few governmental agencies operating at the regional level, CMAP is directly involved in supporting or implementing many of these recommendations.

Tax Policy

GO TO 2040 recommends the formation of a task force on taxation and fiscal issues, staffed by CMAP and reporting to the CMAP Board. This group will address issues of state disbursements of sales tax revenue, sales tax and the service sector, property tax classification and limitations, and local tax capacity equity issues, with the intention of making recommendations for action to the state.

Access to Information

The launch of the Regional Indicators Project, a joint initiative between CMAP and the Chicago Community Trust, will be used to track the region's progress in implementing GO TO 2040. This project includes the collection, standardization, and dissemination of data across a wide variety of subject areas, and an interactive website, MetroPulse, which is expected to be continually improved after its launch. GO TO 2040 emphasizes the importance of not just maintaining and improving the indicators website, but also to actively work with other organizations that could contribute data (local, county, and state governments, transportation agencies, and many others) to create standardized data sharing processes.

Coordinated Investments

GO TO 2040 includes a number of direct recommendations for a more regional approach in planning and investment decisions. These recommendations highlight the importance of a regional role in fostering intergovernmental collaboration, as well as organizing the region's response to available federal or state funding opportunities or through seeking a greater programming role for appropriate funds. GO TO 2040 recommends that CMAP serve as a regional leader for increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of federal, state and other public investments, including funding expected to be allocated through the federal interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities. Regional agencies — not just CMAP, but the regional transit agencies as well — should also ensure that their current programmatic decisions support GO TO 2040.



The Regional Transportation Asset Management System (RTAMS), administered by the RTA, provides a variety of data concerning the region's transportation systems, including utilization statistics, financial records, and information about ongoing planning or capital investment projects. Image courtesy of [RTAMS](#)

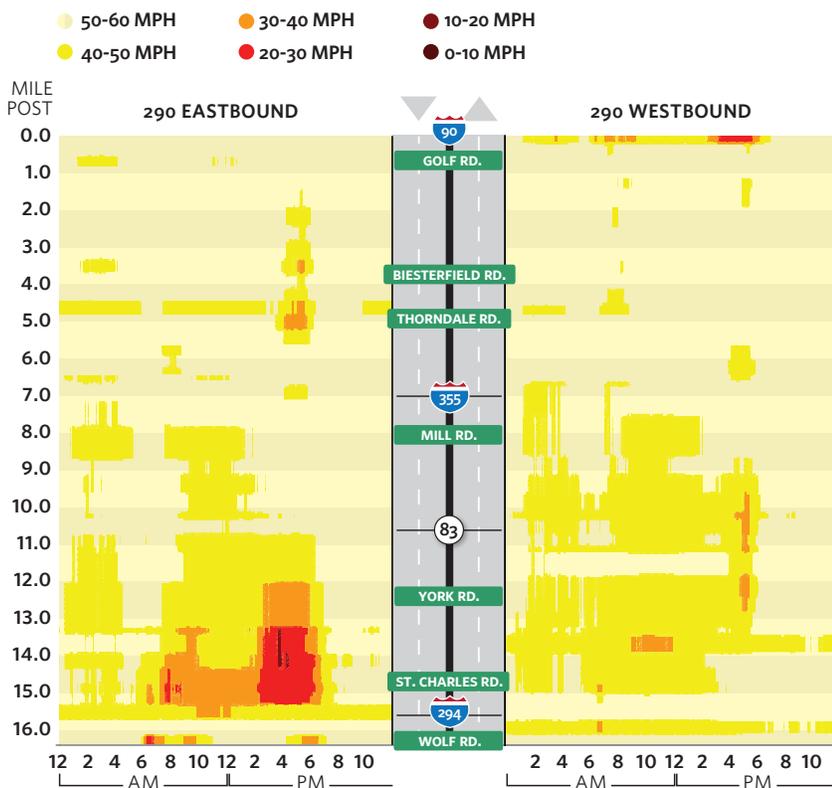
Regional Mobility

Regional agencies are the primary targets of the high-priority recommendations of GO TO 2040 concerning regional mobility. The following summarizes some important actions that these agencies can undertake.

Transportation Finance

GO TO 2040 addresses both the need for more transportation revenue and the importance of making investment decisions based on thorough evaluation and setting of priorities. Regional agencies have central roles to play in both of these areas.

I-290, Congestion Scan, 2007 Tuesday-Thursday



The task of managing and reducing congestion begins with quality data. Data collected across the region through CMAP's Congestion Management Process (CMP) has been used to evaluate where our system has significant delays or bottlenecks and at what times of day. This data can then be used to determine where new projects should be prioritized and to assess what type of solution might work best. After completion of a project, congestion data can be used to assess whether the solution improved traffic flow or not. From CMAP Library

Note: Average speed is shown as a function of time of day (the horizontal x-axis) and location (the vertical y-axis).

Source: Analysis by Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, based on data from Traffic.com.

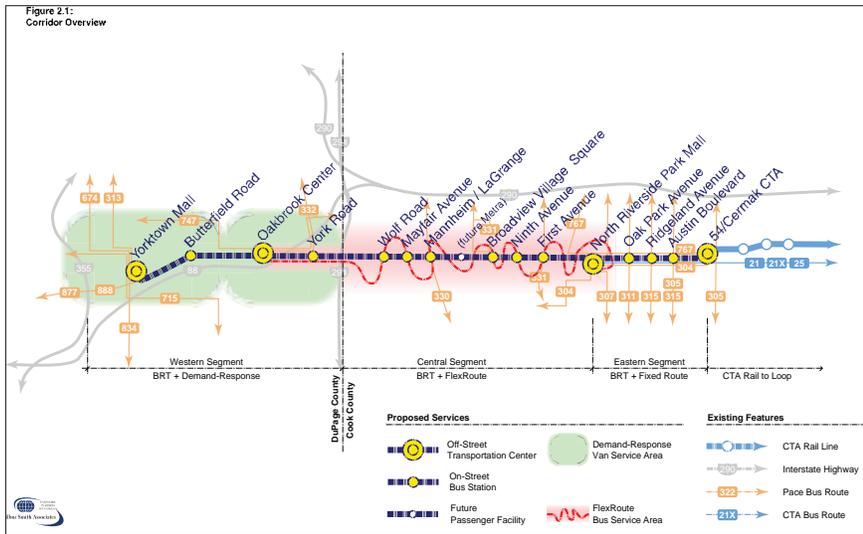
To help support GO TO 2040, regional agencies should focus their efforts on maintenance and modernization, and pursue only limited capital expansions. Reinvestment in existing infrastructure is shown to have higher economic returns than new construction, and also supports reinvestment in existing communities. A focus on maintenance would also help to reduce deferred maintenance, moving the region toward a “state of good repair.”

Prioritizing infrastructure investments for the greatest long-term gain is also a significant emphasis of this plan. Investments in transportation infrastructure should improve mobility and reduce congestion, but regional agencies can also give high priority to projects that improve job access and strengthen the economy, improve air quality and water quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and strengthen overall public **health**, among other factors. Thorough evaluation is necessary to understand project impacts on these various factors, and regional agencies can work together with state, federal, and other agencies to improve transportation modeling and make it more comprehensive, allowing the use of transparent evaluation criteria for project selection.

Finding new funding sources for our transportation needs also requires a central role by regional agencies. GO TO 2040 recommends advancing congestion pricing projects and other managed lanes strategies, either through incorporating these features as part of capacity addition projects on expressways or converting existing lanes. Other finance options such as parking pricing, public-private partnerships (PPPs), or the use of value capture strategies around transit stations can all be explored at the regional level, though their application will ultimately be local. Due to limited potential for new transportation funding from the federal and state level, regional agencies will need to lead efforts to raise funds at the regional level to address our transportation needs. Regional agencies can conduct research, provide data, convene stakeholders to create consensus, and develop recommendations for action; implementation is often the responsibility of other groups.

Major Capital Projects

GO TO 2040 recommends pursuing a limited number of major capital expansions on the expressway and transit system. Regional agencies have an important role to play in developing investment priorities, and also, in the case of the regional transit agencies, actually constructing and operating the identified projects. The construction of highway-based major capital projects are the responsibility of state implementers (IDOT and the Tollway), but the region can provide these agencies with recommendations to be considered in project design and implementation.



Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a cost-effective way of providing high quality transit service to under-served areas. Arterial BRT usually involves Transit Signal Priority (TSP) and queue jump by-pass lanes along arterial routes. TSP facilitates the movement of buses through traffic-signal controlled intersections. When a bus is behind schedule, a device on the bus sends a signal to upcoming intersections that automatically gives the bus priority by extending green lights, shortening reds, or providing queue jumps. This priority for transit helps to improve travel times along the route and ensure schedule reliability. Image courtesy of Pace

Public Transit

GO TO 2040 makes a number of recommendations directly to the owners and operators of our region’s transit system, including RTA, CTA, Metra, and Pace. These agencies can take active roles in seeking innovative financing ideas and prioritizing their own investments to maximize efficiency.

The region’s transit agencies have a clear and primary role in improving transit operations. Operational improvements can include adopting new technologies to improve service and provide traveler information, making transfers between modes seamless, improving and expanding service, and many other improvements. See the plan’s section on public transit for a much more extensive treatment of this issue.

Freight

GO TO 2040 emphasizes the importance of freight infrastructure investments, policy changes, and other institutional issues, such as exploring the creation of a regional freight authority to finance needed infrastructure improvements and address community impacts. In CMAP’s role as a convener of regional transportation stakeholders, it can take the lead in exploring issues such as this, including researching similar examples from around the nation, discussing organization options with affected groups, and identifying an appropriate host agency.

CMAP can also conduct research and analysis of freight data and convene transportation agencies and freight industry representatives. GO TO 2040 specifically recommends supporting the work of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE) partnership to implement it and plan for next steps; cataloging regional truck routes and exploring opportunities for dedicated truckways; and improving the region’s ability to analyze freight data and incorporate freight priorities into regional investment decisions.



Riders of the CTA bus system have been very pleased with the CTA’s recent Bus Tracker program. The web-based program uses GPS technology to give customers bus arrival times and service information for all stops along all bus routes. Users can access the information through the Internet, text messaging, or through popular cell phone applications that use the information provided by CTA. The popularity of the program is due to the simple concept of providing information to the customer. Image courtesy of CTA**ustracker.com**

Other actions that support regional mobility

GO TO 2040's recommendations are not a comprehensive list of the actions that can be taken by regional agencies to support regional mobility. A variety of other activities are regularly undertaken by CMAP to improve the region's transportation system. These include CMP, the use of intelligent transportation systems (ITS), proactive approaches to transportation safety and security, planning for non-motorized transportation, and ensuring system accessibility by all users. The following also discusses other practices that can be followed by all transportation implementers (state, regional, county, and local agencies) regarding managing the impacts of transportation investment.

Congestion Management Process

First, the regional **Congestion Management Process** (CMP) can provide an ongoing opportunity to address transportation operational issues. This is a systematic approach to congestion that provides information on transportation system performance and on alternatives for alleviating congestion and enhancing mobility. To develop and implement the congestion management process and its component management and operations strategies, CMAP partners with government agencies at all levels, civic and advocacy groups, academic institutions, the planning and engineering communities, and other groups.

GO TO 2040 supports addressing the following strategies on an ongoing basis as part of the Congestion Management Process:

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) reduces the demand for peak-period single-occupant vehicle travel by encouraging alternatives to traveling alone by auto, with emphasis on more efficient travel planning and private vehicle use. Specific TDM strategies include **ridesharing programs**, **car-sharing**, alternative work arrangements, **parking management**, guaranteed ride home programs, and transit and rideshare incentives.

Transportation System Management (TSM) is the application of construction, operational and institutional techniques to make the most productive and cost-effective use of existing transportation facilities and services. TSM can be applied through the retrofitting of existing facilities, and/or as part of new or reconstructed facilities. Strategies pursued through TSM include traffic operations center, traffic signal improvements, geometric improvements, time of day restrictions, ramp metering, commercial vehicle improvements, construction management, and roadside equipment and in-vehicle systems for cars. Upgrading transit vehicles and facilities is also a form of TSM.

Access management improves travel flow on arterials and collector roadways, and includes driveway management, median management, and frontage roads as specific strategies.

Incident management is also addressed through the CMP, and includes incident detection and verification, response, clearance, and providing information (including alternative routing).

The CMP can also involve roadway expansion for congestion relief, albeit in a targeted way.

Several of GO TO 2040's high-priority recommendations specifically cover items also considered to be part of the CMP. These include transit capital and operating improvements (covered in the public transit section) and congestion pricing and other **managed lanes strategies** (covered in the transportation finance section).

Two elements of the CMP — encouraging the use of non-motorized modes, and pursuing ITS — are described in following in further detail.

Non-motorized transportation

A good walking and bicycling environment is essential for our region. Barriers to pedestrians, bicyclists, and people with disabilities can discourage mobility, require expensive auto trips, or even prevent trips. GO TO 2040 supports improving conditions for non-motorized transportation. CMAP has played a central role in encouraging local, county, and state implementers to implement pedestrian and bicycle improvements, and these elements are addressed as critical elements of livable communities in GO TO 2040. **The Soles and Spokes** program is an important part of CMAP's ongoing operations and its continuation is also supported.

Seniors and the disabled face unique transportation challenges; GO TO 2040 supports the consideration of the needs of these groups in the course of providing regular transportation improvements and services. Transit agencies have established programs to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which contributes greatly to improved transportation safety for all persons. Specific attention is given to accessibility and safety in the design of transit vehicles, stations, bus shelters, and other facilities; GO TO 2040 supports continued progress in this area. Continued operation of paratransit services to comply with and exceed the requirements of ADA is recommended, and improvements to fixed-route bus services are also recommended to encourage use of these assets by all riders.

Intelligent Transportation Systems

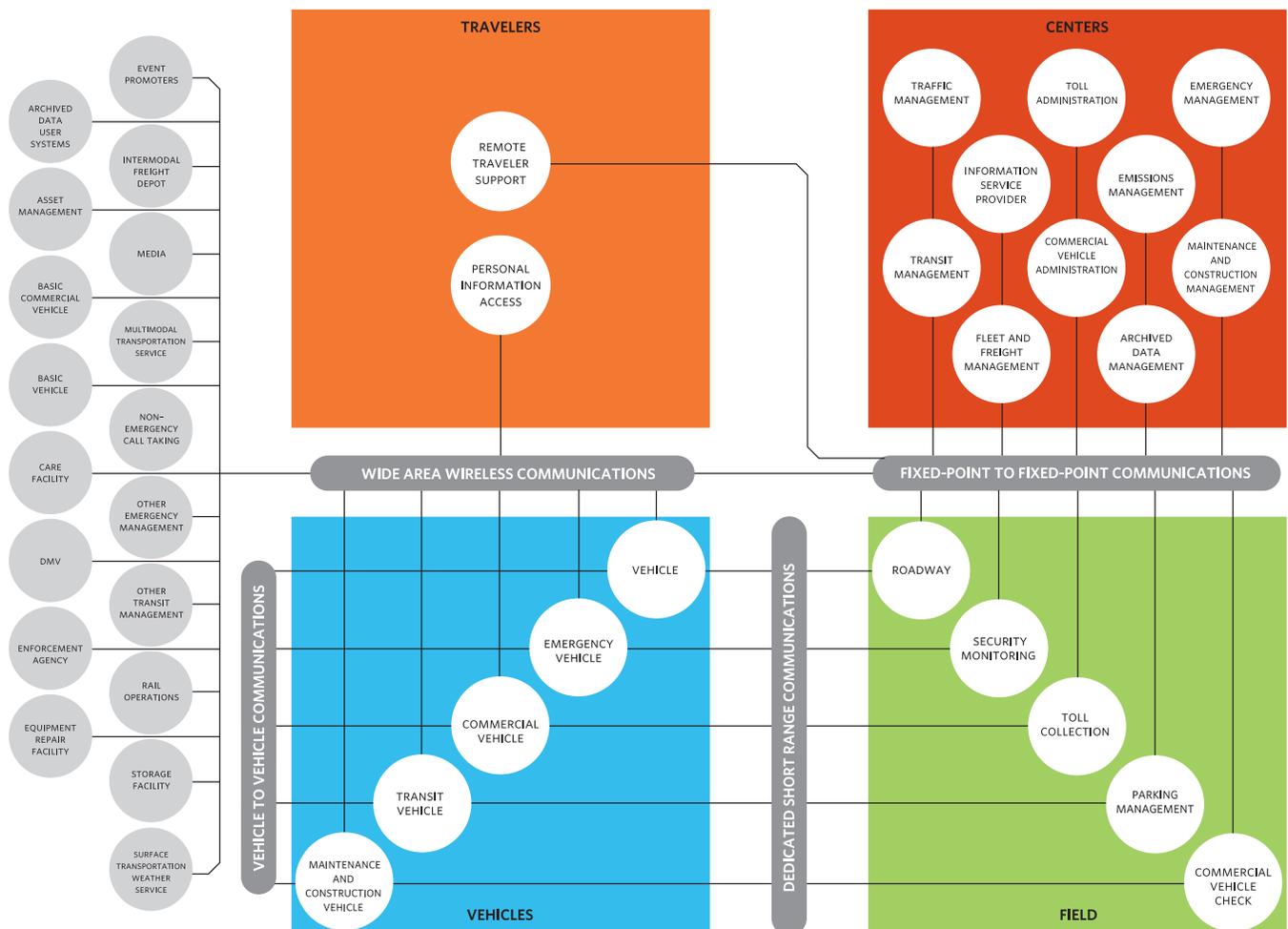
Intelligent transportation systems (ITS) includes advanced approaches to traffic management systems, traveler information systems, public transportation systems, commercial vehicle operations, and vehicle control systems. Specifically supported projects include a system of regional traffic management centers that will coordinate communication and operations for the transportation system; and a regional and multi-state communications system that provides real-time travel condition and emergency management information.

GO TO 2040 supports the ongoing development and implementation of the region’s principal ITS blueprint, the *Strategic Early Deployment Plan for Northeastern Illinois (SEDP)*. The SEDP includes the “ITS Architecture,” a 15-year guide for transportation technology integration in northeastern Illinois. Each transportation project can be viewed as an element of the overall ITS architecture, providing visibility into the relationship between individual ITS projects and ways to cost-effectively build an integrated transportation system over time.

The regional ITS architecture also contains guidance on enhancing safety and security efforts. Discussions have included how ITS can help emergency responders communicate with transportation implementers to jointly improve system operations, particularly during emergencies.

A cooperative effort by the region’s transportation agencies, covering all modes and roads in the region led to the creation of the Northeastern Illinois Regional ITS Architecture. This ITS Architecture essentially serves as a roadmap for integrating ITS throughout the seven-county region. The architecture represents a shared vision of how each agency’s systems will work together in the future, sharing information and resources to provide a safer, more efficient, and more effective transportation system for travelers in the region. The architecture provides an overarching framework that spans planning agencies, operating agencies, and other organizations. Using the architecture, each transportation project can be viewed as an element of the overall ITS, providing visibility into the relationship between individual ITS projects and ways to cost-effectively build an integrated transportation system over time.

From CMAP Library



Safety

GO TO 2040 identifies public safety as a crucial goal. This includes developing a transportation system that provides for safe travel by all modes. Promoting transportation safety is primarily focused on reducing injuries and loss of life associated with travel. Beyond this, implementing effective strategies to reduce crash risk and exposure will also reduce the economic losses and significant transportation system disruptions that result from crashes. Federal and state law significantly governs travel safety, including the design and operation of transportation facilities, vehicle design and operation, and behavior. In addition, safety is the subject of intense public education efforts.

The role of GO TO 2040 is to support ongoing efforts by all transportation system operators to improve safety; it does not make specific recommendations for changes in ongoing practices. Safety should be addressed by all transportation implementers — whether federal, state, regional, county, local, or others — as a regular part of transportation planning, programming, design, and implementation. All projects included or referenced in the plan should comply with current safety standards based on individual project studies.

GO TO 2040 acknowledges the Illinois Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan and transit agencies' System Safety Program Plans, and supports implementation of the strategies identified in these plans, as well as other strategies to improve safety. Significant strategies supported by GO TO 2040 include: developing safety information systems to facilitate better decisions; improving highway-rail crossing safety and the safety of large truck operations; increase intersection safety through a variety of enforcement and engineering strategies; and particular strategies targeted to vulnerable users of the transportation system. These include:

General pedestrian and bicyclist safety. Roadway improvement funds should be devoted to improving pedestrian and bicyclist safety where necessary, and should include safe and inviting sidewalks, safe bicycle facilities, and crosswalks or traffic calming techniques. There are strong links between local planning and support for alternative transportation modes.

Programs to improve safety near schools, through Safe Routes to School (SRTS) projects or programs. The objective of these programs is to increase walking and biking to school among children, which has positive impacts on health and community livability.

Strategies to support safe travel for seniors and people with disabilities. Seniors and the disabled experience unique transportation challenges, and are likely to make transportation decisions based on perceptions of safety. It is important to create a safe and secure system to allow their travel — particularly through improvements to pedestrian facilities and the transit system.

Security

The **security** of the region's transportation system is another important goal of GO TO 2040. The plan supports coordinated responses now under way to address identified security threats and to overall increase **emergency preparedness**, including the overarching goals in the "Illinois State Transportation Plan," the continued work of the Illinois Terrorism Task Force, and specific security planning by transit agencies. In addition, GO TO 2040 acknowledges that additional work has taken place and will take place to address security by transportation providers and public safety offices of governments at all levels, but that much of this work must not be documented publicly.

GO TO 2040 supports efforts to deploy ITS infrastructure to facilitate security by deterring, detecting, and responding to specific security threats, and by providing information to decision-makers and response personnel. It also supports the design and construction of transportation facilities to accommodate security needs, including the availability of multiple routes and modes. GO TO 2040 promotes strategies to coordinate incident response to minimize casualties and disruption, including evacuation procedures that assure the evacuation of vulnerable users, and communications plans that assure that coordinated actions are taken by the public and response personnel.

Managing the Impacts of Transportation Investment

The region also has a role in encouraging transportation implementers to consider the broad impacts that their decisions and investments have beyond transportation improvements. In general, GO TO 2040 supports the use of **Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)** principles — which include involving stakeholders in the decision-making process, using the flexibility inherent in transportation design standards, and balancing the many competing interests — in the design and implementation of transportation projects. GO TO 2040 particularly supports efforts by transportation implementers to consider the community, economic development, public health, and environmental impacts of projects.

Community and economic development impacts can be addressed through using CSS principles to develop solutions that promote local community quality, individuality, and economic development. GO TO 2040 recommends coordinating transportation improvements with the land use, community development, or economic development plans developed by local governments. It is particularly important to resolve the interaction of transportation projects with official historical, cultural, and agricultural preservation plans, as part of the federal project development process.

GO TO 2040 further recommends that project implementers prioritize environmental stewardship as part of their transportation investments, and supports thorough investigations of environmental concerns during project development and design phases to avoid, minimize, and mitigate effects. Environmental issues that should be considered include, but are not limited to, water quality and supply, stormwater, open space preservation, biodiversity, wetlands, and agriculture; transportation implementers should also consult with state, regional, local, and other plans regarding the natural environment. Also, implementers should be aware of flood risks when planning and designing infrastructure; flooding in our region is expected to increase in the future due to the impacts of climate change, which may require different design approaches or avoidance of floodplains altogether.

Much of the environmental impact of transportation is governed by national, state, and local environmental protection regulations; one specific regional role includes demonstrating that GO TO 2040 meets air quality standards (described further in the Appendices). The environmental impacts of the major transportation capital projects recommended in GO TO 2040 are addressed in the transportation finance section.

Counties and Councils of Government

This section is targeted to units or coalitions of government that are between the municipality and the region in terms of size. These include very different types of organizations or alliances, but they operate on similar geographic scales. They include:

County governments and other governments organized at the county level.

Councils of Government (COGs), or voluntary associations of municipalities and some special purpose local government units.

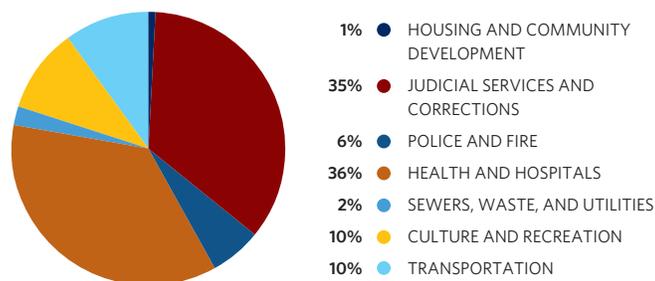
"Collaborations," or coalitions of governments, nonprofits, and private sector entities organized to serve specific goals such as transportation planning, affordable housing, and others; these are often organized through counties or COGs.

How County and COG Decisions Affect Plan Implementation

One of the region's great strengths is its commitment to highly local governance, where a resident's elected leaders may live just a few doors down and village proceedings are invested with a real sense of shared purpose. Yet there are many issues that go beyond individual communities, and local leaders often join or form voluntary associations to grapple with larger matters or seek mutual benefit.

Counties are a multi-faceted level of government. They have responsibilities for planning and regulating land use in unincorporated areas, and they also provide services in health, criminal justice, stormwater management, economic development, property records and tax assessment, and transportation. Criminal justice and health account for more than 70 percent of county expenditures, with transportation adding another 10 percent (see **Figure 69**), according to data from 2006. Note that Cook County operates a hospital system, while the collar counties do not, which affects the share of expenditures devoted to health and hospitals. As a county urbanizes and more land becomes incorporated, its responsibility for regulating land use decreases, while its responsibilities in other areas increase. Thus there are great variations across the region in terms of the effort put into county land use planning; regardless of this, all counties can play a role in helping to translate the regional principles of GO TO 2040 into strategies that can be successfully implemented locally. A number of other specific-purpose groups are organized at the county level, although they are separate institutions or units of government; most relevant for this section are the forest preserve and conservation districts.

Figure 69. County expenditures, 2006



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006

COGs are membership organizations of local governments, and help to convene municipal leaders. COGs provide forums for municipalities to discuss common issues, organize responses to regional or state initiatives, share best practices and local experience, organize purchasing pools, and so forth. A best practice — in housing, urban design, energy efficiency programs, stormwater management — may be novel, but a municipality next door may have adopted it with great success. COGs can help to make this communication happen. COGs also help create the networking environment in which local governments can find opportunities to partner for mutual benefit, as is necessary to implement a number of strategies in GO TO 2040. Some COGs also have responsibility for transportation programming decisions, which are an important element of plan implementation (in other cases, these responsibilities rest with Councils of Mayors housed at the county level).

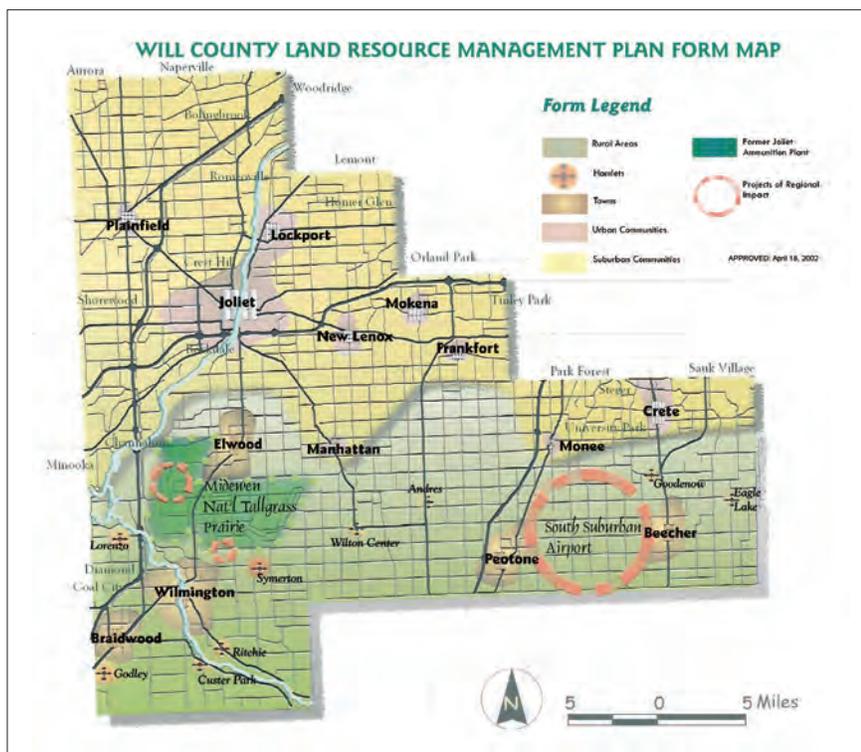
The term “collaborations” is used somewhat loosely to describe multi-jurisdictional cooperative efforts of various types along a spectrum of formality. These can be used to address common issues, such as transportation, housing, or economic development, which cross jurisdictional borders but are not fully “regional” in scale. Collaborations can address many of the priorities of GO TO 2040, such as improving transit service, planning for affordable housing needs, or attracting economic growth to disadvantaged communities. Collaborative groups are often sponsored in part by counties or by COGs, and also by other organizations. Many of the recommendations in GO TO 2040 involve improving coordination between different units of government, and collaborative planning and implementation is an important part of this.

Livable Communities

As conveners of municipalities, COGs have a role in assisting with the implementation of livable communities, which include land use and housing, resource conservation, open space, and local food. Counties are also central to addressing livability because they have land use regulatory authority in unincorporated areas as well as the ability to convene and coordinate municipal planning.

Land Use and Housing

Counties have a key role in the promotion of livability through their land use planning responsibilities. Many counties have regional planning commissions that provide guidance on long-range planning activities. With involvement from these groups, counties can play a key role in bridging the regional ideas and principles in GO TO 2040 with their implementation at the local level. In many parts of the region, counties also provide valuable technical assistance to municipalities and help to negotiate boundary and joint land use agreements.



The 2002 Will County Land Resource Management Plan established a policy that the majority of new urban and suburban development should occur within municipalities, saying further that "the most desirable form of county development is a compact one that directs development into and around existing communities and service areas." For its own role, that plan indicated that the county should seek to balance the efficient use of land with compatibility with nearby neighborhoods. Image courtesy of Will County

GO TO 2040 recommends that most household and employment growth occur within existing municipal boundaries, and that it should be relatively denser than growth has been in recent years. For those counties with significant nonurban land, it will be important to continue to produce comprehensive plans (also called “land resource management plans”) whose goals include strengthening both urban and rural areas. To support GO TO 2040’s interest in reinvestment in existing communities, county plans can focus development onto land within existing municipal boundaries. County plans of this type also frequently address other issues related to livability, such as **historic preservation**.

Counties also have responsibility for zoning and plat review in unincorporated areas. In such cases, it is crucial for county boards to exercise the leadership needed to make zoning decisions consistent with their land resource management plans, which may include limiting the approval of developments in unincorporated areas. In areas where unincorporated development is preferred, however, it is important to use **low-impact or conservation design**. Conservation design entails preserving a significant portion of the natural features on a development site by using flexible lot sizes and shapes as well as using advanced stormwater best management practices.

GO TO 2040 calls attention to the importance of collaborations between communities for transportation, housing, economic development, and other issues. These can often allow participating jurisdictions to access more funding and derive more benefit for themselves than they could by going it alone. Counties and COGs can often act as the sponsors or facilitators of these efforts. Collaborations can also encompass both the public and private sectors. The many chambers of commerce and development corporations in the region are organized to serve areas ranging from commercial districts to cities, in many cases relying on a public-private model to maximize their effectiveness.

Resource Conservation

GO TO 2040 recommends actions that the region’s local governments, including both counties and municipalities, can take to conserve water and energy and to manage stormwater.

County comprehensive plans and programs can address water supply and demand management. This has become an increasingly important issue because groundwater levels in aquifers serving outlying counties have been declining and in some cases are showing higher concentrations of chemicals like barium and radium. CMAP’s **Water 2050** report recommends that county governments protect groundwater by taking aquifer recharge areas into account in comprehensive planning, and developing ordinances to regulate land use in recharge areas, among other actions. Although they do not often operate water utilities, counties can administer or help implement many water conservation best management practices, such as appliance and water fixture rebates or providing a conservation coordinator.



McHenry County instituted conservation design requirements in its subdivision code that go into effect when there are important natural resources on a development site. Image courtesy of Flickr user [Thomas Merton](#)



The South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) is an intergovernmental agency providing assistance to 42 municipalities in Cook and Will counties. SSMMA’s services are diverse, ranging from assistance with open space planning to joint purchasing agreements to legislative advocacy to operating a bond bank for municipal infrastructure projects. From CMAP Library



McHenry County Water Resources, along with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, developed a map of Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Areas (SARAs) and has been working to integrate it into comprehensive plan recommendations. While its methodology is oriented toward the sand and gravel aquifers of the county, a similar method could be used elsewhere. Image courtesy of Flickr user [Kelly Dobbins](#)

COGs also have an important role in water supply planning and management. Through participation in **Water 2050**, both counties and COGs have had an integral role in shaping the goals and policies that will guide water supply and demand management within the region in the upcoming decades. They also play an important role in implementation, as they provide a forum in which members can learn more about water conservation measures within the ambit of municipal utilities. GO TO 2040 specifically recommends examining the consolidation of water supply and wastewater treatment services to increase efficiencies; counties and COGs can take an active role in beginning these discussions.

Counties have responsibility for stormwater permitting in unincorporated areas, and through the unique countywide committee system in northeastern Illinois, minimum performance standards for stormwater are also set at the county level. Standards for drainage, detention, and other concerns help protect against flooding and damage to water resources. Stormwater management programs have been successful, but could be strengthened by use of **stormwater best management practices**, especially green infrastructure, to promote infiltration. Another concern is the maintenance of stormwater infrastructure; counties can help address this by investigating the use of maintenance fees.

Counties also have an important role in solid **waste management**. All Illinois counties are required by the state to develop and implement twenty-year solid waste management plans. Counties can help to encourage recycling and composting waste, as well as continuing to explore alternatives to landfills.

Open Space

GO TO 2040 includes a number of direct recommendations to forest preserve districts and conservation districts, which are organized at the county level but are separate units of government. Forest preserve and conservation districts operate in each county in northeastern Illinois and play a major role in providing **regional open lands**. In many ways, they have been tremendously successful. Their model is to acquire undeveloped land using proceeds from the sale of bonds, the debt service ultimately being covered by property taxes on the more developed land in the county. It is important for forest preserves and conservation districts to consider the long-term management of the lands they protect, in particular to emphasize **ecosystem restoration** of their holdings wherever possible. GO TO 2040 recommends specifically that forest preserve and conservation districts participate in regional efforts to prioritize land protection and ecosystem restoration activities, and then to reflect these priorities in their actual work. Counties can also play a significant role in open space preservation by addressing open space needs in their comprehensive plans and land use regulations.

Furthermore, local governments fall within natural boundaries as well as political or administrative boundaries, such as when the land within several political divisions all drains to one body of water (i.e., is within one watershed). Watershed planning is a process often used to bring leaders from these jurisdictions together to help solve problems in a **waterway**, such as flooding or poor water quality, to which they contribute or which affect them in some way.



Among other stormwater best management practices, the Lake County Central Permit Facility uses native plant bioswales. These shallow excavated swales with deep-rooted native plants are designed to collect, absorb, and filter stormwater runoff and pollutants that collect on the parking lot pavement from automobiles. County government can be a leader in using stormwater best management practices. Photo and description courtesy of Lake County.



On November 4, 2008, voters in Lake County approved a \$185 million referendum with 66 percent of the vote for the Lake County Forest Preserves to acquire and improve land to protect wildlife habitats, conduct ecosystem restoration, and to provide flood control and recreation. Certain properties that the Forest Preserves had been targeting for years were in danger of being sold for other purposes. Of the funds, \$148 million will be used for land acquisition purposes. It is estimated the referendum funds may establish 3,000 acres of preserves. Image courtesy of Flickr user [Bob Callebert](#)

Local Food

GO TO 2040 recommends the preservation of agricultural land and an increase in production of local food. Across the region, counties have taken the lead in the implementation of **farmland preservation**. This can be encouraged by making it a focus of comprehensive planning, which most counties do, but farmland preservation is most successful when it has a stable funding program. Counties and nearby forest preserves or conservation districts should also work together to support agriculture as part of preserved open space.

Other Actions That Support Livability

Counties are largely responsible for **public health**, and can use this expertise to link the features of livable communities with positive health outcomes. Besides this role, counties can play a significant part in coordinating human service programs, which are often carried out by a variety of organizations and different levels of government. An important way to do so is by participating in a **211 system** (modeled on the 911 system) that provides callers with information and referrals about human services and related community information. Counties typically distribute Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, coordinate energy assistance programs, and have a number of other responsibilities. The central role of the counties in providing human services gives them the ability to help convene service providers and funders to ensure that needs are being addressed appropriately.



A strong and successful farmland preservation program in the region is that of Kane County, which has a purchase of development rights program funded through taxes on casino receipts. The program is used to ensure that farmland will not be converted to another use by a future owner. Image courtesy of Flickr user [Cassandra Pozulp](#)



The DuPage Funders' Collaborative is a group of public and private organizations using their combined strength to achieve a wider understanding of health and human service needs of the population served and the providers; to promote efficiency and effectiveness; and to seek improved and sustainable funding for human services. Photo courtesy of [iStockphoto.com](#)

Human Capital

The GO TO 2040 plan seeks to improve the region’s economic prosperity and includes high-priority recommendations in the areas of education and workforce development and economic innovation. It also generally supports efforts by entities within the region to improve its overall business environment.

All seven counties undertake economic development activities, although the approach and the level of resources vary considerably between them. Counties are uniquely positioned to do the kind of economic development recommended by GO TO 2040 that yields broad economic benefits — job creation, productivity increases, income growth — over narrower fiscal benefits that accrue to only one jurisdiction or that merely move economic activity from one location to another. Among the general economic development services the counties can provide are information that municipalities and the private sector can use to support business development. They can also encourage transportation projects that support businesses.

Education and Workforce Development

GO TO 2040 emphasizes the importance of community colleges and Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), which are typically organized at the county level. Counties can play a role by facilitating collaborations between community colleges and workforce investment boards as there is untapped potential within the community college system to support workforce development and to fill gaps between worker skills and employer needs, and by linking their economic development work to these institutions. Supporting the growth of **green jobs** is an area where such collaborations are particularly relevant.



The Will County Center for Economic Development (CED) provides a comprehensive, forward-looking picture of business conditions in Will County. It serves members and potential investors with workshops and tours of economic assets in the county. Will County CED also works with communities and the County to provide business incentives. Image courtesy of [Will County Center for Economic Development](#)



The McHenry County College recently began offering several career training programs dedicated to “green collar” jobs. This would complement an initiative to promote energy efficiency retrofits in buildings and promote renewable energy production in the county, as it would also help support the market for community college graduates’ skills. Image courtesy of Flickr user [David Hallberg](#)

Efficient Governance

The GO TO 2040 plan also includes recommendations that relate to governance in the areas of tax policy, access to information, and coordinated investment.

Tax Policy

GO TO 2040 emphasizes the importance of efficient, predictable, and transparent state and local tax policies that do not distort land use decisions or stifle economic activity. While tax policy issues largely focus on the state and local municipal governments, counties play an important role in terms of property assessment, which helps determine equalized assessed values and tax rates by local jurisdiction. Counties can help by making their assessment systems as predictable and transparent as possible for the taxpayer, and not placing undue tax burdens upon either residential or commercial property owners and renters, which can alter location decisions and thus distort economic activity.

Access to Information

GO TO 2040 recommends the increased sharing of data among government agencies, and between government and the public. Making federal, state, regional, county, and other data available will reduce the time needed to do time-consuming research by staff of other government agencies. There is also a significant role for counties in making administrative data, such as building permits, publicly available — which in turn reduces the need for research by other government agencies. Sharing data with the general public also improves transparency and fulfills the ever-increasing expectations of the public concerning the availability of information.

Coordinated Investments

GO TO 2040 recommends investigating the coordination of services, or in some cases consolidation, of units of local governments (including townships, park districts, library districts, and many other types). In many cases services are matched well to the level of service residents want, but in other cases they are duplicated in overlapping or neighboring districts and merely cause confusion for residents. The recession has stimulated greater belt-tightening among local governments, and consolidation can be a way to gain cost efficiencies. Counties and COGs can have a key role in bringing local governments together and facilitating discussions on service coordination and consolidation opportunities.

Regional Mobility

Counties and COGs also play a role in supporting the high-priority recommendations related to regional mobility, particularly those related to transportation finance and public transit.

Transportation Finance

GO TO 2040 emphasizes the importance of making better and more efficient transportation decisions, as well as finding additional revenue to support transportation. As owners of roadways and other transportation infrastructure, counties can help to support GO TO 2040 by prioritizing maintenance and modernization in their investment decisions, and pursuing major infrastructure expansions only on a limited basis.

Councils of Mayors are groups of municipalities which select projects to be funded by the Surface Transportation Program (STP), a federal program. These groups are convened and staffed by either counties or COGs. STP funds can be used to improve arterial and collector streets or to implement transportation control measures, like bicycle facilities, commuter parking lots for suburban transit, or similar strategies. Each Council receives individual funding and determines its own methodology for selecting projects, subject to federal guidelines. Local councils have broad discretion in how they select projects, and can support GO TO 2040 by allocating funding to projects that help to implement the plan.

Public Transit

GO TO 2040 also highlights the importance of local support to make transit work. Counties can support transit through land use planning, small-scale infrastructure investment, and contributing funding, and both counties and COGs can also work with transit agencies to plan for transit improvement or expansion in their areas. In the case of investments in new or expanded transit service, collaboration is crucial to address density and design throughout a corridor even though these can vary depending on the jurisdiction with land use control.

Certain kinds of **urban design** improvements can be effective at a larger scale as a collaboration between local governments which could be facilitated by a county or COG. Streetscaping and access management along major arterials is one of these. As a major streetscape overhaul would address issues of appearance and functionality along the corridor, benefits gained by improvements in one jurisdiction could be lost by disregarding improvements needed across a jurisdictional boundary.



Kane County is working in partnership with a group of municipalities to improve transit accessibility along Randall Road for Pace Route 529. The existing corridor lacks sufficient access for pedestrians and disabled persons, while many of the buildings along the corridor have large setbacks with extensive parking, limited sidewalks, and no waiting areas. The study is intended to address these design issues across the five municipalities in the corridor (Aurora, North Aurora, Batavia, Geneva, and St. Charles). Image courtesy of Flickr user [geonerd](#)



The DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference (DMMC) stands out as an example of a COG whose project selection process for STP funding is criteria-based and clearly prioritized. Projects funded under this program are evaluated on the basis of cost-effectiveness, congestion reduction potential, readiness, innovativeness, funding leverage, and the size of the area to which benefits accrue. Image courtesy of [DMMC website](#)

In transportation, collaboration between units of government is often shaped by a major travel corridor. For example, transportation management associations (TMAs) are generally organized at the corridor level, frequently by employers who wish to encourage commute trip reduction. Commute trip reduction is a major part of **transportation demand management (TDM)**, which would be more difficult without the assistance of a TMA. They can have positive impacts on travel behavior; comparable areas without active TMAs generally have considerably lower alternative mode shares. As there are only three active TMAs in the region, there are ample opportunities to establish more, and counties and COGs can take an active role in this.

Other Actions That Support Regional Mobility

Counties have jurisdiction over more than 2,000 miles of highway in the region, giving them an important role in congestion management as well as supporting alternative transportation modes. An important low-capital means of reducing congestion is to improve operations by employing **intelligent transportation systems (ITS)**. Another important area for counties to emphasize is **access management**. Counties can manage the spacing of driveways, number of curb cuts, median openings and so forth along arterials and collectors they manage to improve traffic flow.

Research in recent years has made it clear that low-density patterns of development and increased automobile dependence are associated with lack of physical activity and poor **public health** outcomes. As counties are front-line providers of **public health** services across the region, they have a special interest in the connection between health outcomes and the physical landscape as shaped by development decisions.

In fact, counties have begun to explore that relationship in order to promote fitness for residents as part of their planning efforts as well as project implementation. County planning can establish land use and transportation policies that help increase physical activity. Related to their role in protecting public health by promoting active lifestyles, counties may also encourage a “complete streets” approach to roadway design, making sure that needs of **pedestrians** and **bicyclists** are accommodated. Counties also can take a leadership role in providing both on-street and off-street bicycle facilities and encouraging connections between municipal bicycle systems.



The TMA of Lake Cook has focused corporate leadership on providing alternative travel options for the TMA’s member employers, including expanded city-to-suburb and suburb-to-suburb commuter rail and a national-model “Shuttle Bug” service from commuter rail stations to employment sites. The shuttle service grew from 110 daily trips when it began in 1996 to 1,300 daily trips today. From CMAP Library



Lake County’s “Program for Arterial Signal Synchronization and Travel Guidance” (PASSAGE) gives motorists real-time information about traffic bottlenecks via electronic signs or an AM radio station. Based on the same information collected by cameras and traffic sensors, operators can also adjust traffic signal timing to reduce congestion buildup. This still-expanding ITS system is a model for other counties. Image courtesy of [Lake County](#)



Through the Communities Putting Prevention to Work program, Suburban Cook County is taking steps to reduce obesity — a mounting epidemic — by promoting policy changes to help residents lead healthy, active lifestyles. These include increasing nutritional options, decreasing opportunities for excess caloric intake from unhealthy foods and beverages, and increasing the availability of safe places to be physically active. Image courtesy of Jane Healy

Municipalities

The region contains 284 municipalities, and their elected officials, appointed officials (like plan commissioners), and staff are the intended audience for this section of the plan. To a lesser extent, actions that can be taken by park districts, townships, and other units of government of similar size are also discussed. In the following pages, this section describes how municipal actions can support the implementation of GO TO 2040, stressing the plan's recommendations but also covering other areas. It relies heavily on case studies and best practices from around the region, with links to CMAP web pages that have further information on these topics and more examples of case studies and best practices.

How Municipal Decisions Affect Plan Implementation

Municipalities are critical to the success of GO TO 2040 because of their responsibility for land use decisions, which create the built environment of the region and determine the livability of its communities. The most important thing that a municipality can do to implement GO TO 2040 is to take this responsibility very seriously.

This requires a local commitment to proactive planning, as well as the right set of planning “tools,” including an up-to-date local comprehensive plan, ordinances and other regulations that are consistent with the comprehensive plan, and trained decision-makers — primarily plan commissioners and local elected officials — who fully understand the impacts of their land use decisions.

Local governments are also owners and operators of significant elements of the region’s transportation system and spend nearly \$2 billion per year on transportation, which is more than the federal government and slightly less than the state. Investment in open space, either by municipalities or through stand-alone park districts, occurs at the local level. Municipalities are directly involved in creating “livability,” one of the central themes of GO TO 2040. This is not just through regulation and investment, but also through programs that create a sense of community identity, such as fairs or fireworks displays, or support for local arts and culture.

Municipalities are also the primary providers of many government services, such as police, fire, and other emergency services, public works, garbage collection, and many others (although not all municipalities have all of these functions). These are important functions but are outside the scope of GO TO 2040. In other words, municipalities have responsibility for many important functions beyond the issues covered in GO TO 2040 such as land use regulation, transportation, and open space.

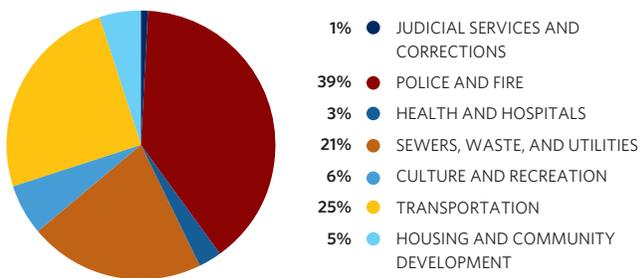
According to data from the U.S. Census, shown in **Figure 70**, municipalities spend the greatest share of their resources (39 percent of expenditures) on police and fire services. This is followed by transportation expenditures (25 percent), mostly focused on maintenance and operation of local streets; and by expenditures on other public works activities, namely sewers, waste disposal, and utilities (21 percent).

Special-purpose units of local government can also support the implementation of GO TO 2040. Park districts are sometimes a municipal department and sometimes a stand-alone unit of government, but in either case they play a central role in the provision of open space and recreational areas in a community. Townships have responsibility for road maintenance, particularly in unincorporated areas. Townships also provide

a variety of human services, operate (or contribute to) paratransit services, and maintain parks in some parts of the region. A variety of other special-purpose units of local government, such as library districts or fire protection districts, also exist across the region, but the services provided by these governments are outside the central focus of GO TO 2040.

Many municipalities already do things that support the priorities of GO TO 2040, and many have plans and ordinances that are good examples of how the plan can be implemented. These best practices should be shared and spread across the region. There is no “one size fits all” solution across communities in the implementation of GO TO 2040’s recommendations. Municipalities are encouraged to develop their own locally specific ways of defining the concept of livability and to support development that meets their definitions. One consistent element across municipalities is the importance of proactive planning; regardless of how they apply livability principles, municipalities have the right and the responsibility to actively plan for their futures and implement their plans.

Figure 70. Municipal expenditures in northeastern Illinois, 2006



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and CMAP analysis

Livable Communities

Municipalities are among the most important implementers of the high-priority recommendations of GO TO 2040 that relate to livable communities, including land use and housing, resource conservation, open space, and local food. Other municipal actions beyond these also support the concept of livable communities, and are discussed after the high-priority recommendations.

Land Use and Housing

GO TO 2040 discusses the important role of local land use regulation in supporting livable communities. The plan recommends a number of actions directly to municipalities, and provides additional recommendations to CMAP and other regional agencies concerning technical and financial assistance to support local planning. The overall direction is to improve the “building blocks” of local planning — up-to-date comprehensive plans, consistent ordinances, and trained decision-makers — and use these tools to plan for livable communities; there are already many good examples of this occurring in the region, described further below.

A major way that municipalities can implement GO TO 2040 is by pursuing reinvestment within their existing developed areas. In the long run, development within existing communities is typically more efficient than development on the fringes of the region because these areas are already served by infrastructure. Particularly strong opportunities for redevelopment can be found on **brownfields**, or land on which contamination may be present (former industrial sites, gas stations, or dry cleaners are often brownfields). Communities can conduct inventories of brownfields, and then seek state and federal funding and private investment to redevelop them. This not only returns the brownfield to active, productive use, but it benefits the entire neighborhood, as studies of the impact on brownfield redevelopment on nearby property values have shown.

Pursuing denser, mixed use development can also support GO TO 2040.

The definition of “denser” development differs between communities but generally means densities that are somewhat higher than prevailing patterns of development in that area. The definition of “mixed use” also varies and can refer to mixing land uses (such as residential, office, or retail) within a single structure or on the same block, or even simply providing connections between residential and commercial areas of a community.

Municipalities are encouraged to review their plans and ordinances to see where denser, mixed-use development could be supported, and to work collaboratively with developers to find locally-appropriate ways to accommodate them. Planning for dense, mixed-use development near transit, in the form of **transit oriented development (TOD)**, is a particular focus of GO TO 2040, which gives specific recommendations to local governments and transit agencies to accomplish this.



In Palatine, a brownfield site near this residential development was redeveloped as structured parking as part of a larger downtown development effort. The cleanup had significant catalytic effect on nearby properties as well, with the value of nearby property doubling within five years after completion of the cleanup. Image courtesy of [Patrick Barry](#)



The “Uptown” development near the Park Ridge train station includes fairly dense residential development (over 200 units on 5 1/2 acres), retail and restaurants, and open space. Buildings are four to five stories in height, and designed to be friendly to pedestrians and consistent with Park Ridge’s existing architecture. This project has won awards from Illinois American Planners Association and Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) chapters in recent years. Image courtesy of [Congress for the New Urbanism](#)

GO TO 2040 treats housing as a critical part of the region’s infrastructure and seeks a balanced supply of housing distributed throughout the region; there are a variety of ways that municipalities can support this goal. Because every community is unique, a study of housing supply and future demand is recommended to understand the most important housing issues to address.

Municipalities are in the front lines of discussions about housing. They can do much to counter negative perceptions that residents may have about affordable housing — which are typically expressed most strongly at the local level in response to development proposals that include affordable housing. Municipalities can do this by mixing affordable housing within developments and paying close attention to the design and appearance of proposed affordable housing. Putting a face on the residents of affordable housing is important; a mix of housing units is needed to allow “aging in place” by residents and provide homes for teachers, nurses, and other valuable members of a community. The perception that affordable housing means concentrated areas of poverty and crime needs to be countered.

A key strategy for creating an adequate and regionally balanced supply of affordable housing is for municipalities to support and permit its construction. Affordability and balance are broad concepts, and there will be varying ways that local governments define these terms to meet local needs. Some areas face particular **regulatory barriers** in providing a range of housing, but can use techniques like density bonuses, allowance of accessory apartment, streamlining permitting processes, or other tools to encourage developers to propose affordable units.

In many communities, more active approaches than simply permitting affordable housing are needed. These work best to promote livability when targeted to specific situations, rather than broadly applied. For example, **housing preservation** programs work well in communities seeking to preserve the quality or the affordability of their housing stock, or to rehabilitate it. On the other hand, **inclusionary zoning** programs can be applied in communities that have limited affordable housing but are interested in creating more. A broad variety of other techniques, such as land trusts, foreclosure interventions, and others are also appropriate in different situations.

An overall sense of community is an essential component of livability — but is difficult to define or quantify. A municipal government cannot create a sense of community from scratch, but it can facilitate its development. While it may seem far removed from the regional scale of GO TO 2040, efforts by municipalities to create vibrant communities with active civic and social lives are actually very related to the region’s future.

High-quality design is critical to create livable communities. Attractive streetscapes and buildings, public spaces for civic life, and overall appearance of an area are all important elements, but are challenging to quantify. Municipalities can create design review boards or similar groups to review the character of new development.

Local historic context is important in every community, and reinvestment projects can be balanced with historic preservation that respects context and character. More than just individual buildings, preservation should address context and landscapes. Preservation can complement urban design projects and encourage reinvestment in existing communities. Some communities also find **teardowns** to be threatening to their character, and can seek to limit them or reduce their negative impacts.



After working closely with the local chapter of the Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities in Illinois and developers working in the community, the Village of Bolingbrook passed an ordinance in 2003 that requires all new single-family homes to be built with features that allow a person in a wheel chair to visit without any special assistance. Nationally-recognized for its leadership in the area of “visitability,” Bolingbrook has witnessed the addition of thousands of new homes accessible to persons with limited mobility, including older adults, featuring at least one step-free entrance, minimum widths for doorways and hallways, and a first floor bathroom which allows for wheelchair access. Image courtesy of [Concrete Change](#)



St. Charles is one of several local communities in our region to adopt inclusionary zoning. Yet unlike most communities, which require developers to set aside a flat percentage of homes as affordable, St. Charles created a “tiered” system, which requires new developments of different sizes to incorporate a different percentage of affordable homes. The ordinance also provides developers with fee waivers for affordable homes and density bonuses. Image courtesy of [Tom Henneman](#)



The Sears, Roebuck Power House in Chicago was converted from a defunct power generation building (built in 1905) to an education center. Portions of the original machinery were incorporated into the new buildings, which offer math and science courses that acknowledge the City’s technological progress over time. This project won the Landmarks Illinois Project of the Year award in 2009. Image courtesy of [David Schalliol](#)

GO TO 2040 supports intergovernmental coordination between municipalities, as this can be an effective means to address issues like transportation, housing, or economic development that are broader in scope than a single community. Coordination can effectively occur between neighboring communities, or between communities facing similar issues that may be more remote from each other. GO TO 2040 identifies this as a high priority, and recommends that municipalities work with their local county or Councils of Governments (COGs) — organizations that are described at greater length later in this chapter — to accomplish this.

Resource Conservation

GO TO 2040 focuses its recommendations on actions that communities in the region can take to conserve energy and water and manage stormwater, and supports an active approach for municipalities in this area. Some of these recommendations are directed to water utilities, which are often housed at municipalities; others are directed to local governments in general. A number of best practices in resource conservation practices by municipalities, described below, are already underway.

Incorporating water — drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater — into local planning would support GO TO 2040, which recognizes the interconnections of these systems. Municipalities have a great deal of responsibility in these areas. They can prescribe the performance standards (although minimum requirements are usually set at the county level) used to manage stormwater, and they often make permitting decisions for drainage and stormwater detention. They often have primary responsibility for floodplain management, as well. Municipalities can support GO TO 2040 by encouraging **stormwater** best management practices through the development process. It is also important for municipalities to collaborate in watershed plans that identify and propose solutions for water resource problems. The resource conservation section specifically recommends a variety of stormwater best management practices that should be considered by municipalities.

Drinking water utilities are generally operated by municipalities. While conditions vary across the region in terms of water sources, water rates, and so forth, the main thing municipalities can do to support GO TO 2040 is to encourage water efficiency through **conservation best management practices**. These can range from metering all customers to leak detection programs to using reclaimed water; the use of full cost pricing is a specific recommendation of the resource conservation chapter.

Most wastewater treatment systems in the region are operated by municipalities (although the largest volume of wastewater is treated by the regional sanitary districts). Through good **wastewater planning**, municipalities play an important role in protecting streams from pollution. The use of improved wastewater technologies is a good way for local communities to continue their role in preventing pollution from entering streams. There are many options available, such as nutrient removal, membrane bioreactor technology, and others. Wastewater is also connected to land use planning in that new wastewater infrastructure is generally needed in newly developing areas to support new growth.



A group of 28 municipalities in Cook County formed the South Suburban Housing Collaborative to develop a comprehensive, coordinated redevelopment plan for their communities, which were some of the hardest hit by foreclosure in Illinois in recent years. The Collaborative leveraged funding from local, state, and federal agencies and programs to support the redevelopment plan. Image courtesy of [Joe Balynas](#)



The Villa Park police station in DuPage County was built on the site of a parking lot downtown. It decreased runoff in its mostly built-out watershed by three stormwater best management practices: a green roof, bioretention swales, and permeable paving in the parking lot. The police station is also an example of infill development. The project was partly financed by a grant from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA). Image courtesy of [IBC Engineering Services, Inc.](#)

Many municipalities are taking action to limit their emissions of greenhouse gases and overall impact on climate change. The primary contributor to climate change is **energy use** in homes and businesses (followed by the transportation system). Because of this, GO TO 2040 highlights the retrofit of existing buildings as a particularly important element of a climate change strategy, with roles for regional, local, and other agencies. As a first step to addressing energy use, communities can create climate action plans, which provide baseline assessments of current energy use and greenhouse gas emissions and also lay out reduction strategies.

Municipalities can address energy use by both examining and improving their own practices, and by affecting private energy use through education, regulations, or incentives. Designing energy-efficient public buildings, or retrofitting existing buildings, provides a good example to others in the community and can have positive fiscal benefits through lower energy costs. GO TO 2040 specifically recommends that local governments play the role of early adopters, acting as demonstration models of innovative energy and water conservation activities.

Local governments are also well-positioned to address **waste disposal** issues. Municipalities can ensure that their own facilities have recycling options, and through their role as the unit of government primarily responsible for garbage collection, can also create residential or commercial recycling programs, or promote other waste reduction programs like composting. Municipalities that experience high levels of construction or demolition activities can also look for solutions to reduce debris from these activities, including “deconstruction” practices for demolition.



To address sustainability, the City of Elgin established a “Green Initiative” — a series of projects and plans designed to create a “greener” Elgin. The first phase of the green initiative involves undertaking several “eco-friendly projects,” including a program to create a comprehensive tree inventory and maintenance program, and a revolving loan program to assist homeowners to fund energy efficiency upgrades in their homes. In addition, the City of Elgin has teamed up with ComEd to offer its residents a variety of incentives for making decisions that result in reduced energy use. These projects are designed to help Elgin begin to become more “green” while a more formal and comprehensive environmental master plan is created. Pictured above is Sherman Hospital in Elgin, which is powered by renewable geothermal energy. Image courtesy of City of Elgin

Open Space

GO TO 2040 addresses conservation open space like forest preserves, local parks, and connections between open space. The recommendations identify the provision of local parks as the primary role for municipalities (or park districts, where these are stand-alone units of government), although municipalities can also have a role in connecting larger open space parcels using trails. Because municipalities have land use regulation responsibilities, recommendations concerning conservation design, which can help preserve and provide connections between open space, are also directed to them.

Municipalities and park districts can support GO TO 2040 by providing **parks and open space**, an important ingredient of livability, throughout their jurisdictions. Park creation activities can be targeted to places without adequate open space — usually, denser and older parts of the region — and GO TO 2040 recommends that municipalities and park districts seek a variety of ways to increase park space in these areas. Creating connections between larger open space parcels or along waterways through greenways is also a critical action for local governments. Maintaining and improving parks are very important functions — often even more so than expansion — and opportunities to enhance or **restore natural features** in parkland should be explored. Parks can also be used for **arts and culture** programming and can support local arts communities, if passive space is included and informal arts activities are encouraged.

Municipalities can use **conservation design** to minimize the negative environmental effects of development or provide environmental enhancements. This can be applied on greenfield sites, but also as part of reinvestment projects as a form of urban greening. Conservation design can include open space as part of a site, natural landscaping, clustering of buildings, permeable pavements or other surfaces, green infrastructure approaches to stormwater management, and green building design. The open space chapter recommends more aggressive use of conservation design concepts in areas with valuable natural features, but they can be applied to some degree anywhere in the region. A major step that municipalities can take to promote conservation design is to permit it as a by-right use, instead of a conditional use; this makes the development process more predictable for developers and makes it more likely that proposals for conservation design projects will be received.

Local Food

GO TO 2040 highlights the fact that local food production and distribution is increasingly being recognized as an element of livable communities. Municipalities across the region can encourage small-scale food production by permitting certain agricultural activities as a conditional use, and by converting publicly-owned vacant lots to food production. Communities with large areas of farmland either within or adjacent to their boundaries can also zone for larger-scale **agricultural production** in these areas, preserving them as farmland. Food distribution issues can be supported by local governments by assessing whether there are “food deserts,” areas where fresh food is not accessible, within the community and working with retailers to solve these problems, or by supporting local farmers’ markets.



In 1999, a citizen led group approached the Barrington Park District about purchasing a 55-acre, former industrial site in hopes of transforming it into a community park. Three years later, Barrington residents approved a referendum that eventually allowed for the construction of Citizen's Park, which houses several unique amenities including an amphitheater, a 3,000 sq. ft. pavilion, and a fully accessible, 2,000 sq. ft. tree house. The park has won awards from the Illinois Association of Park Districts, among others. Image courtesy of Vermont Timber Works



The Homer Glen Conservation Design Ordinance was passed in 2006 to create a mechanism that would allow for the addition of up to 1,000 acres of new open space. Unlike most existing conservation design ordinances, Homer Glen's is mandatory, requiring “developers of new residential subdivisions to set aside between 20 percent and 50 percent of the area as permanent, dedicated, publicly-owned open space.” The ordinance is meant to result in open space that could “be connected from one neighborhood to the next, where feasible, creating an extensive, interlinked network of open spaces.” Image courtesy of Flickr user [Roberto41144](#)

Other Actions That Support Livability

GO TO 2040's recommendations do not provide a full view of everything that municipalities can do to support livable communities; many that are not covered in detail in the high-priority recommendations are also important components of other activities of livability. Some of these — though by no means a comprehensive list — are discussed below.

Municipalities can provide opportunities for local **arts and culture** to flourish. They can increase programming in local public buildings and include art in public spaces. Also, municipalities can permit artist live-work spaces and allow a mix of land uses — both are important ingredients for a lively local arts scene.

Also, conflicting development standards between municipalities and school districts have been identified as a particular problem. Some **school siting** regulations effectively prohibit school construction on any sites but large, undeveloped areas on the fringe of a community. Municipalities should work with school districts, as well as neighboring municipalities who share the same school district, to eliminate conflicting regulations and update ordinances.

Local governments have an important role to play in safety and security. Municipalities can **prepare for emergencies** and encourage their citizens to do the same leading to a “culture of preparedness;” establishing good relationships with other local governments, transportation agencies, and federal and state agencies can help with coordination in the event of an emergency. Local governments also have a particular role in ensuring that vulnerable residents within their communities, including the elderly and disabled, those living in group quarters, or those without cars, are included within evacuation and recovery plans.

Many municipalities provide police service and can adopt community-oriented policing strategies that cross jurisdictional boundaries. Because of their broad responsibilities, some municipalities have developed programs that link community-oriented policing efforts with human services provision and economic development, with positive impacts on **crime and public safety**. Communities that have public spaces that encourage interaction between different groups can lead to improved **human relations** outcomes and cultural understanding.



The Village of Algonquin adopted a “Public Art Master Plan” in 2005 to promote local art, as well as that from the region, country, and world while improving property values. The plan was established to “enhance the community’s sense of place,” provide educational opportunities for artists, and create a planning framework to distribute and fund art through the community in a way that made sense. The plan led to the formation of a Public Arts Commission to oversee this effort. Image courtesy of [Village of Algonquin](#)



In the event of an emergency, many people are unwilling to leave their pets if their animals cannot be evacuated. The Palatine Emergency Management Agency (EMA) has established a volunteer Animal Response Team that is responsible for the rescue of animals trapped or left-behind, along with their shelter, care, and reunification with owners. Image courtesy of [Anne Hornyak](#)

Efficient Governance

The GO TO 2040 plan also includes high-priority recommendations that relate to governance, including tax policy, access to information, and coordinated investment. Direct municipal roles are recommended to address access to information and coordinated investment.

The plan’s tax policy recommendations are primarily oriented to the state, but will affect local governments. The main recommendation of the tax policy section is to form a task force at CMAP that will be responsible for conducting further research on this subject and recommending specific action; municipal representation on this task force will be sought.

Access to Information

GO TO 2040 recommends the increased sharing of data among government agencies, and between government and the public. Making federal, state, regional, county, and other data available will reduce the time needed to do time-consuming research by staff of other government agencies. There is also a significant role for municipalities in making administrative data, such as building permits, publicly available — which in turn reduces the need for research by other government agencies. Sharing data with the general public also improves transparency, and fulfills the ever-increasing expectations of the public concerning the availability of information.

Coordinated Investments

GO TO 2040 notes that the sheer number of local governments in the region — not just municipalities, but townships, park districts, library districts, and many other units — can make coordination difficult. Service coordination, or in some cases consolidation of some governmental units, can create greater efficiencies and reduce duplication of services. Municipalities can best approach this sensitive issue through direct conversations with other nearby local governments about the benefits and challenges of service coordination, facilitated through or in partnership with a county or COGs.



The City of Chicago posts its business license information [online in searchable format](#). This allows the public to search for business licenses by geography, including street address, ward, or block, or by business name. Image courtesy of [CityofChicago.org](#)



In 2008, the Villages of Kildeer and Deer Park combined their police services into a single department. Each contributes funding for the shared services, which are recognized as being higher quality than could be provided independently. The compatibility of the communities and their proximity were major elements in the success of the service. Image courtesy of [Michael Brown](#)

Regional Mobility

Municipalities also have a role to play in supporting the high-priority recommendations related to regional mobility, including transportation finance, public transit, and freight. Other municipal actions beyond these also support regional mobility, and are discussed after the high-priority recommendations.

Transportation Finance

GO TO 2040 addresses the need to make better and more efficient transportation decisions as well as find additional revenue to support our transportation system. As owners and operators of thousands of miles of local roads and other transportation facilities, there are a variety of ways that local governments can support GO TO 2040. The bulk of local spending on transportation is devoted to maintaining the road system. Local governments are encouraged to continue to focus their investments on improving and modernizing their existing infrastructure, and pursue major infrastructure expansions only on a limited basis.

Municipalities can support GO TO 2040 by reviewing their **parking** regulations and pricing policies. Many zoning ordinances have excessively high minimum parking requirements, and there are opportunities to reduce these or allow shared parking between compatible nearby land uses.

Most parking across the region is free and easily available, even though the construction and maintenance of a parking space is far from free. Municipalities are generally responsible for pricing public parking (and can also influence parking pricing in private lots), and should recognize that pricing affects travel behavior. Parking pricing is a key transportation revenue source to be investigated. Raising or initiating parking prices can be controversial, should be pursued with caution, and is not universally appropriate; using parking revenues for visible projects such as streetscape enhancements can help to build public support. Parking can also provide access to transit, and many municipalities with train stations manage commuter parking. Appropriate parking rates vary based on parking availability and service levels, and need to be established individually. In some cases, municipalities can use parking revenues to support access to transit through alternative modes.



An evaluation of Oak Park's parking supply led to a comprehensive parking management program. The new program eliminated hourly limits, priced spaces by desirability, lowered garage prices, and made it easier to pay for parking with the use of pay boxes. Image courtesy of [Total Parking Solutions, Inc.](#)



The Village of Niles is improving the pedestrian experience along a 5-mile stretch of Milwaukee Avenue as part of their Milwaukee Avenue Beautification Plan. The first improvement is the intersection of Milwaukee at Touhy. Intersection improvements include new brick-paved crosswalks and pedestrian countdown signals, decorative street lights, benches, planters, and sidewalks. As an area with many senior citizens and high traffic volumes, the Village hopes that this will make crossing the street safer and more pleasant. Future plans include a proposed arterial rapid transit (ART) bus service, which these improvements will help to support. Image courtesy of the [Village of Niles](#)

Public Transit

GO TO 2040 identifies municipalities as important actors in supporting transit service, due to their responsibility for land use regulation and their ability to provide small-scale infrastructure improvements. In general, support for alternative transportation modes — including walking, bicycling, **car-sharing**, and others — supports transit service, and can be addressed by municipal action.

Transit works best in **walkable** communities; making a community walkable requires infrastructure investments such as sidewalks, pedestrian crossings at major roads, and curb cuts and ramps for wheelchairs to allow access by disabled residents. Direct pedestrian connections between transit stops and nearby destinations are important to make transit attractive to use. Other small-scale infrastructure improvements also help to support transit, including installing bus shelters, adding bicycle racks at train stations and bus stops, or removing on-street parking spaces to improve bus access.

Transit also requires supportive land use planning in the form of **transit oriented development (TOD)**, with sufficient densities and a range of housing options, to be most successful. Beyond physical infrastructure improvements, making a community walkable and transit-friendly also involves land use planning that creates a comfortable environment for pedestrians and uses **high-quality design** features. Communities can implement TOD planning principles around current stations, and also plan proactively for transit service expansion.

Freight

GO TO 2040's freight recommendations are oriented primarily toward federal, state and regional groups, and private industry, but addressing the impact of freight on communities is very relevant for municipalities. Municipalities can work with regional agencies and the freight industry to identify and address community concerns in terms of grade crossing delay, noise, pollution, or other issues. Local governments can also coordinate truck route designations with neighboring areas, review delivery time policies and truck parking restrictions, and may seek to actively attract freight-related businesses for economic development purposes.



Realizing the importance of freight to future development, the village of Blue Island incorporated “cargo-oriented development” into their “transit oriented development” plan along two Metra rail stops in the industrial corridor — to increase retail as well as industry and freight, strengthening their downtown. Image courtesy of Flickr user [Christopher Esposito](#)

Other Actions That Support Regional Mobility

The plan's high-priority recommendations include a specific focus on transit, but support all alternative transportation modes; local governments can support GO TO 2040 by planning multimodally for their transportation systems.

Best practices in local road management include complete streets techniques, which allow for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit accommodations, and may involve narrower lane widths for lower-volume and low-speed roadways. On collector or higher-volume roads, local governments can pursue practices such as **access management, signal timing adjustments, or signal interconnects**, in coordination with county transportation departments or the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). These improvements can speed traffic flow while not requiring major construction or significant capacity additions.

Municipalities can also support **bicycling** as an important transportation mode. Most experts recommend a “three-E” process of education, enforcement, and engineering, recognizing that it is critical for both bicyclists and drivers to understand the rules of the road, and for traffic laws regarding driver behavior to be enforced. Engineering can include striping bicycle lanes or signing roadways for shared bicycle use, pursuing “complete streets” techniques on roads, constructing off-street trails, and providing bike parking near transit or high-volume locations. Planning for bicycle access and parking at train stations and bus stops can help to support transit. Also, bicycle routes that are components of greenways can also help to support connections between parks and other open space.

Promoting walking and bicycling as serious transportation options can have positive impacts on **health** and is especially helpful for certain residents. Pedestrian and bicycle access is particularly relevant around schools, giving students the opportunity to walk or bike. Having a range of alternative transportation options allows older residents to “age in place” and helps to create communities that are friendly to seniors and the disabled.



In Wilmette, an 18-month construction project has converted 4-lane Sheridan Road into a 2-lane road with bike lanes in either direction and a middle turn lane from Lake Avenue north to Westerfield Drive and the Plaza del Lago. Image courtesy of the [Village of Wilmette](#)



Schaumburg has 87 miles of bike paths, 1,000 bike parking and locker spaces, bike racks on village trolleys, bike parking at the Metra station and the Northwest Transportation Center, a local bicycle club, and bikeway connections to neighboring communities. The village was designated a Bicycle-Friendly community in 2003 by the League of American Bicyclists. Image courtesy of the [Andreas Siegel](#)

Nongovernmental organizations

While most of the recommendations of GO TO 2040 are directed to the public sector — as befits a plan focused on public policy — many other nongovernmental organizations in the region play major roles in the areas covered by GO TO 2040. These include philanthropic organizations, civic organizations, community-based nonprofits, advocacy groups, and some types of membership organizations. This section uses case studies to provide positive examples of how these groups can help to implement GO TO 2040, and contains many links to CMAP's website for more information.

How Nongovernmental Organizational Decisions Affect Plan Implementation

The metropolitan Chicago region has a rich variety of nongovernmental organizations that seek to improve the prosperity and livability of our region. Together, these groups exert significant influence on public policy and private decision-making, and are significant players in the future of our region. Their potential roles in plan implementation vary based on organization type; a few examples are below.

Philanthropic organizations provide funding for many different types of initiatives, including some that are central to GO TO 2040. These organizations can fund activities that are generally outside of the scope of the public sector, and have the ability to quickly redirect funding in response to new threats and opportunities. Partnerships between philanthropic organizations and the public sector can be quite effective, and a notable example includes the Regional Indicators Project, a joint effort of CMAP and the Chicago Community Trust. These partnerships can pair the flexibility of private funding with the institutional capacity of government, and GO TO 2040 recommends a number of areas where this type of arrangement would help to implement the plan.

While contributing funding is an obvious way to affect the priorities of GO TO 2040, there are many other ways that nongovernmental organizations can contribute to the plan's implementation. They can contribute research and make recommendations, advocate for legislative changes, and push the public sector toward better decision-making, among other actions. Some nongovernmental organizations serve an important role in convening government agencies and other advocates; examples of this include Chicago Wilderness (CW), which convenes environmentally-focused groups, or the Urban Land Institute (ULI), an organization of development and real estate professionals. Nongovernmental groups are active at a variety of levels, from those that cover the entire region (and often beyond) to those that focus their efforts in a single community or neighborhood.

Clearly, the organizations and roles above only scratch the surface of what nongovernmental organizations undertake. A full description of their current activities and possible future work is beyond the scope of this document, which focuses on how they can help to implement the specific recommendations of GO TO 2040. The plan supports further efforts by these groups to improve our region's prosperity and livability in ways not specifically discussed on the following pages.

Livable Communities

Livability is a complex topic, made up of a variety of elements. Nongovernmental organizations can play a direct role in some of GO TO 2040's high-priority recommendations concerning livable communities, in the areas of land use and housing, resource conservation, open space, and local food, and their role extends far beyond these topics.



In collaboration with Chicago Metropolis 2020, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus has produced a series of reports entitled [Homes for a Changing Region](#). The first report forecast a serious mismatch between the type of housing being planned in the region and the housing likely to be needed by its expected 2 million new residents. Subsequent reports took the next step and developed detailed, community-specific plans aimed at providing a balanced housing supply for Aurora, Libertyville, Oak Forest, Gurnee, Montgomery, Northlake, Blue Island, Plainfield, and Woodstock. Image courtesy of [Chicago Metropolis 2020](#)

Land Use and Housing

GO TO 2040 emphasizes the importance of local land use regulation in creating livable communities. While regulation of land use is a public sector activity, there are ways for nongovernmental organizations to contribute to this goal. Technical assistance to municipalities is a central part of GO TO 2040's approach to livability, and nongovernmental organizations can play a major role here. For example, the American Planning Association (APA) can assist in providing training to local planning commissioners concerning their responsibilities. As another example, groups like the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC), Chicago Metropolis 2020, or the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC) can provide assistance to communities in addressing their affordable housing needs through locally-appropriate strategies. GO TO 2040 recommends that nongovernmental organizations like these work closely with CMAP to coordinate technical assistance activities and partner in their implementation where appropriate.

There is also a potential role for philanthropic groups in this area. They often fund civic or nonprofit organizations to do the types of technical assistance described above, and can even have a role in funding certain elements of local comprehensive planning.



Throughout the City of Chicago, neighbors have come together to turn vacant lots and other unused open spaces into vibrant community gardens and parks. To ensure that the urban "Edens" they worked so hard to create will no longer be vulnerable to redevelopment, local residents and community groups can turn to NeighborSpace, who will acquire the land on their behalf, set up a long-term management agreement with the community, and provide liability insurance for those who use the site. Image courtesy of [Quinn Dombrowski](#)

Resource Conservation

GO TO 2040 prioritizes actions that the region and its communities can take to limit energy and water consumption and to manage stormwater. Among the plan’s key recommendations is the implementation of the Chicago Region Retrofit Ramp-Up Program (CR3), which seeks to facilitate the retrofit of existing buildings in the region for increased efficiency. This program was initiated by a joint effort of governmental and nongovernmental organizations; the latter included the Chicago Community Trust and the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT), among other groups. Further collaborations of this sort can be helpful in addressing the complex challenges that the region faces.

Open Space

GO TO 2040 recommends the expansion and improvement of parks and open space in the region. A significant role can be played by both funders and environmentally-focused nongovernmental organizations. Philanthropic groups, including land trusts, are major funders of open space acquisition, improvement, and restoration. The actions of these organizations can be most effective when they complement the public sector’s role, and GO TO 2040 recommends development of shared regional priorities that both the public, nonprofit, and private sectors can use to guide investment decisions. Beyond funding, other nongovernmental groups can also contribute to improving our region’s open space through convening environmental stakeholders, research and policy development, education and advocacy, direct implementation, or other methods.

Local Food

GO TO 2040 identifies a major role for nongovernmental organizations in supporting local food systems. Philanthropic organizations can continue to fund the work of nonprofit groups that actively work on and advocate for local food issues. They also can play a role in supporting public efforts meant to increase access to healthy food, such as matching public financing to spur private investment in grocery stores in “food deserts,” or linking local food and anti-hunger programs. On the food production side, philanthropic groups can be active in supporting urban agriculture and the creation of community gardens. Often, the efforts that are funded by philanthropic groups are implemented by community-based nonprofit organizations, giving them a central role in GO TO 2040’s approach to local food as well.

Other Actions That Support Livable Communities

Nongovernmental organizations can and do take on a variety of other issues that make our communities more livable. These include investments in **arts and culture**, **crime** reduction strategies, programs that improve **relations between ethnic or racial groups**, strategies that improve **health**, and many others. GO TO 2040 supports the continued work of nongovernmental organizations in these areas.



Fresh Taste is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a region that offers communities equal access to a healthy, sustainably produced, and affordable food supply. Fresh Taste aims to bring about this vision by stimulating system-wide change through collaborative work — internal collaboration, as well as supporting collaborative work among a wide range of community-based nonprofit organizations, private businesses and the public sector. Image courtesy of [Piush Dahal](#)

Human Capital

GO TO 2040 recognizes that the region’s workforce is a major contributor to its future economic prosperity, and a strong role for nongovernmental organizations is recommended.

Education and Workforce Development

GO TO 2040 identifies a philanthropic role in funding efforts to improve workforce development coordination and alignment with the needs of employers, including analyses of career pathways and specific drill-downs into the needs of some specific industries. Beyond philanthropic organizations, nonprofits are identified as the primary organizations that could perform this research. GO TO 2040 also calls upon diverse stakeholders, including nongovernmental groups with expertise in education, to address education quality, equitable access, and improved collaboration.

Economic Innovation

GO TO 2040 identifies a vital role for nongovernmental organizations in supporting economic innovation. Specifically, philanthropic groups can often move more quickly than the public sector in response to market trends, and may be able to provide much-needed startup or commercialization assistance and create linkages between researchers and entrepreneurs.

Other nongovernmental groups are already taking significant roles in promoting innovation, including business development groups like the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, coalitions of economic development organizations like Metropolitan Economic Growth Alliance (MEGA), and universities and other research institutions. GO TO 2040 supports the continued work of these groups and encourages them to coordinate at the regional level.



Originally established through a church-based volunteer program in 1977, Instituto Del Progreso Latino has become a leading city and state educational center. Instituto provides many services and programs to raise education levels and provide job skills. One example is ManufacturingWorks, a training program that responds to employers’ needs in the manufacturing industry. ManufacturingWorks works with businesses to identify skill-gaps in the existing workforce and aligns training programs to meet the needs of manufacturing companies. ManufacturingWorks is a collaborative program between Instituto and the City of Chicago. Image courtesy of Flickr user [elfon](#)



The Chicago Manufacturing Center (CMC) is a nonprofit sustainability strategy and operations consulting firm. The CMC works with manufacturers throughout the Chicago region to support their ability to be a competitive, thriving, and innovative business. The CMC also works with government agencies and the private sector to strengthen the manufacturing sector. In addition to one-on-one consulting, the CMC has several innovative initiatives to promote creativity, sustainability, and profit, including the Waste To Profit Network. The Waste To Profit Network brings companies together to build relationships and identify opportunities to transform waste streams into resources for others. Photo courtesy of [iStockphoto.com](#)

Efficient Governance

Nongovernmental organizations have historically supported good governance, and GO TO 2040 identifies a continued role for these activities. The Regional Indicators Project, a continuing partnership between CMAP and the Chicago Community Trust, will include MetroPulse, a user-friendly website that allows the user to download, graph, and map data from a variety of government sources. This product illustrates the benefits of collaborations between the public sector and philanthropic organizations, and further partnerships of this sort are encouraged by GO TO 2040.



The Red Line extension project would extend the Chicago Transit Authority's (CTA) most heavily-used rail line for an additional 5.5 miles south to 130th Street in the City of Chicago. Its current terminus, at 95th Street, is currently the station with the highest ridership outside of downtown Chicago. For years the Developing Communities Project (DCP), a faith-based organization serving the Greater Roseland neighborhood, has helped to facilitate communication between residents in this area, community leaders, and the CTA, mobilizing resident involvement in advocating for the extension, as well as actively participating in the determination of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) route. DCP continues to engage residents and the local business community in planning for TOD around the four proposed new train stations. Image courtesy of Developing Communities Project

Regional Mobility

GO TO 2040 targets most of its recommendations related to regional mobility to public sector organizations, as they are the primary owners and operators of the region's transportation system. However, while they are rarely implementers of actions in this chapter, nongovernmental organizations can play an important role in research and analysis, and can also effectively advocate for certain policies or investments to be pursued. For all of the high-priority recommendations related to regional mobility — transportation finance, public transit, and freight — this kind of supporting role for nongovernmental organizations is identified.



The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) has partnered with the Tollway to study congestion pricing on a number of expressways across the region. This detailed research has helped to increase the understanding of stakeholders across the region of the potential benefits of congestion pricing. Image courtesy of [Quinn Dombrowski](#)

Development community

This section describes how actions at the site level, primarily by the development community, can support the implementation of GO TO 2040. This includes developers, and also architects, landscape architects, realtors, financial institutions, and others that are involved in development from the private sector. It uses case studies and best practices from around the region, with links to CMAP web pages that have further information on these topics and more examples of case studies and best practices. The contents of this section are not regulatory in nature, and are not meant to limit the actions of developers; instead, they are meant to provide positive examples of how developers can support GO TO 2040 through their actions.

How Decisions at the Site Level Affect Plan Implementation

Much of the built environment in the region is the product of incremental decisions made at individual sites over many years. Private enterprise drives this system, but it is shaped by local government land use controls, such as zoning, as well as a complex mix of policies at other levels of government.

Developers and architects have produced some breathtaking results at the site level, such as the skyscrapers in downtown Chicago. When repeated across larger areas, private undertakings at the site level can emerge into recognizable and lauded districts, such as the Bungalow Belt in parts of Chicago and some inner ring suburbs. On the other hand, development subdivision by subdivision has not always led to livable communities. Many suburbs that originated as residential subdivisions in the post-war years are now working to change their built environment by creating downtown areas as mixed use, walkable centers. This points to the great need for comprehensive planning by local governments, which addresses site-specific development.

Livable Communities

While GO TO 2040 directs many actions to support livable communities toward local governments, developers actually build the homes we live in and the commercial buildings where we work and shop.

They secure sites, draw up plans, obtain financing, shepherd projects through permit review, oversee construction, market the finished product, and shoulder much of the overall risk. To support GO TO 2040, developers can help by building the communities that reflect the principles of livability.

Land Use and Housing

GO TO 2040 emphasizes mixed use development at a density somewhat higher than recent trends. The marketability of denser development will differ between communities, and different communities will have varying definitions of “denser” development; in general, density increases site yield and in many cases reduces per-unit site development costs for developers. The commercial space in mixed-use development can also help create vibrancy at the street level and provide amenities attractive to potential buyers. In turn, increased residential densities are needed to support the new commercial uses in mixed-use developments. A number of barriers to mixed-use development also need to be recognized, such as the effect of location on the viability of commercial spaces, market potential, and the lingering difficulty in securing financing to construct mixed use buildings. Thus, it is important for local planning to take market realities into account.

One of the most important actions developers can take to implement GO TO 2040 is to seek projects in already developed areas. Most residential and commercial development in recent years has been on greenfield sites, yet there are extensive opportunities for profitable development in existing communities across the region.

Infill can be a challenging form of development because of physical constraints and the presence of numerous landowners. It often works best in partnership with municipalities, which can help to assemble land, secure gap financing, or alter zoning.

Such development is sometimes complicated by the potential for contamination on site, either perceived or real. Remediation of these **brownfields** may be needed prior to redevelopment. While developers and lenders may be concerned about the possibility of being caught up in a liability action over harm from contamination, there are state and federal programs to reduce exposure to liability and provide financial incentives for remediation. Fortunately, there are many examples of successful redevelopment projects on brownfield sites in the region.



The \$100 million Westin North Shore, with more than 400 rooms, was built in Wheeling by the consortium Harp Midco Wheeling LLC, a venture by the Village of Wheeling, Mid-America Development Partners, and the Oak Brook-based Harp Group. The site had some contamination from its previous uses, including a horse stable, vacant land, used car lot, and Wonder/Hostess outlet. Image courtesy of Alan Light



Numerous transit oriented developments have been built around CTA and Metra train stations in the City of Evanston. These projects have reinvested in existing developed areas, and support the use of transit. Image courtesy of Dorothy Perry

Transit oriented development (TOD) is a denser form of development that, as the name suggests, is anchored by some form of public transportation, typically a train line. The purpose of TOD is to focus housing and commercial development close to transit infrastructure, thereby providing an alternative to using the automobile, although denser development combined with good **urban design** also promotes walking and bicycle trips. TOD has become much more common in the region in recent years, although many untapped opportunities remain for developers to propose transit oriented projects.

GO TO 2040 aims for a balanced supply of housing throughout the region. While local regulations and incentive programs will help achieve this balance, for-profit developers can aid in meeting the goal by seeking projects at a variety of price points. One of the most important approaches is to mix affordable housing within developments, using good design to give proposed affordable housing an attractive appearance and guarding against the perception that affordable housing causes a concentration of poverty and crime. Local **regulatory barriers** can stand in the way of balanced housing objectives, but developers may take advantage of options to build affordable units, such as density bonuses.

Nonprofit developers play a very important role in providing balanced housing. They often are partners in **housing preservation** programs, which work to protect the quality or the affordability of existing housing stock. Nonprofit developers also construct new affordable housing as well. Many are community based organizations that work within a designated area to serve residents of that area, utilizing financing from many sources to provide good housing options for those who would not otherwise be able to afford them. Nonprofit developers also build in disinvested places where the value of a new building would be less than its construction cost. In so doing, they help to rebuild communities so that they can thrive again.

High-quality design is one of the main ingredients in a livable community. While the overall urban fabric at the block and neighborhood scales should be shaped by local planning, the individual site or lot is still the building block of good urban design. Design review and published design guidelines can be used at the local level to help ensure quality developments, but it is the developer and the architect who play the most significant role in site layout, building details, and other aspects.

The fit of a building with its context is perhaps one of the most important elements of urban design. Building style, massing, height and other factors determine whether a new building fits within its historic context. This is an important consideration in every community, and welcoming new buildings needs to be balanced with **historic preservation**. Because people value the preservation of historic building stock, developers can realize a marketable project, such as an adaptive reuse of a historic building, while also taking advantage of tax incentives available to rehabilitate historic properties.



News that the owner of the Walden Oaks apartment complex in Woodstock had plans to sell the property caused fear that the property would be turned completely into market-rate housing and lose its affordability due to market pressures. Hispanic Housing Development Corporation, a nonprofit housing developer, purchased the property and turned it into a mixed-income project, reserving 125 units for seniors and 25 units for low-income families, with the remaining 42 units market-rate. Image courtesy of Flickr user [Dave Hallberg](#)



HomeTown Aurora is a 1,288-unit development built by Bigelow Homes that includes single-family detached, single-family attached, and loft-style homes. About half of the units are affordable to families earning below 80 percent of the area median income. It includes diverse housing types that appeal to a range of market segments. This compact development also combines smaller private lots with protected open space. Image courtesy of [Bigelow Homes](#)

Resource Conservation

GO TO 2040 recommends a number of actions that can be taken to conserve energy and manage water resources sustainably. Most of the actions are targeted toward local governments, but developers and property owners play a crucial role, as innovative energy and water conservation measures in buildings that go beyond regulatory requirements are the decision of the developer.

A number of programs are available to help reduce **energy use** at the site level. For example, builders can participate in the Energy Star program for new construction, a program in which the builder forms a partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) to develop homes which meet energy efficiency guidelines. The home then earns an Energy Star label, which the builder can market for its lower cost of ownership and environment-friendliness. Developers can also seek certification under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) or use guidelines of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Green program.

Existing buildings also provide many opportunities to reduce energy use. Retrofitting lighting systems, HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning), windows, and other building components can present major savings for occupants, both in commercial and residential buildings. Many programs are available through electric and gas utilities, the state, and others to provide incentives to undertake such work. Many **best management practices to conserve water** are also instituted at the site level, such as high efficiency household appliances and fixtures. Buildings can even be designed so that they harvest rainwater or use graywater for non-potable uses.

Wastewater treatment systems are sometimes installed to serve individual sites and may be financed at least partly by developers, giving them a role in **wastewater** treatment to protect water resources. Developers can seek to have their developments served by the best wastewater treatment technology available, and development sites in some areas can be designed so that reclaimed wastewater can be used for beneficial purposes rather than being discharged into a waterway. Other ways developers can protect water resources are to include effective **stormwater best management practices** in their developments. Some measures will be required in local ordinances, but the effective use of best management practices to reduce runoff volume and improve water quality depends strongly on a developer's commitment to using them.



The Buckingham Building in the Chicago Loop was built in 1929. After its heyday it saw years of vacancy before being redeveloped, starting in 2007, to serve as student housing for Chicago's Columbia College. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places, and the redevelopment project won a Preservation Excellence Award from the City of Chicago in 2008. It is owned by private investors and managed by U.S. Equities. Image courtesy of Flickr user [Zol87](#)



The Ford Motor Company Stamping Plant in Chicago Heights retrofitted its lighting systems with the help of the ComEd Smart Ideas incentive program. Ford replaced more than 1,000 lighting fixtures with high performance, energy efficient models that use 50 percent less energy than the old fixtures and have a longer life. Ford also installed sensors to turn off lights when personnel were not using the room. Image courtesy of ComEd

Open Space

GO TO 2040 addresses the protection of both recreation-oriented parks and conservation-oriented preserves. While park districts and county forest preserves should continue to play the leading role in providing parks and preserves, the private sector has an important and growing role.

For instance, **conservation design** can be used at the level of individual development sites. Conservation design typically involves permanently preserving part of a development site, clustering homes and decreasing the size of private lots to maintain full density. The open space is worked into the site design, generally with a trail network, and developers frequently realize a premium on home sales because potential buyers value the proximity of open space. In some cases developers may work with land trusts to manage the protected open space associated with a conservation subdivision.

GO TO 2040 recommends commitment to conservation design in areas with valuable natural features, but it can be an important approach in other areas. It is also important to try to include recreational open space or parks in development and redevelopment sites. This can be a significant way of meeting standards for park accessibility.



The Sanctuary of Bull Valley is a 200-acre conservation subdivision in central McHenry County developed by Jack Porter and Associates. It includes a long-term restoration plan for the deed-restricted open space. Image courtesy of [Jack Porter and Associates](#)

Regional Mobility

While regional and state agencies play the greatest role in increasing regional mobility, developers can also play a part in supporting a strong regional transportation system. In general, support for alternative transportation modes, including transit, walking, and biking, furthers the implementation of GO TO 2040.

Alternative transportation can be supported on a site-by-site basis in a number of ways. Most basically, developers can include sidewalks within their developments; a walkable community is a basic precondition for transit. Larger developments can also benefit from internal bicycle facilities, whether on-street striped lanes or off-street trails.

Further, developers can seek to connect their internal networks of pedestrian and bicycle facilities to larger, external networks. This will likely involve working with the local municipality, county, park district, or forest preserve district, depending on the development's location. Coordinating to create these external connections can make internal sidewalks and bike trails part of a larger, regional system and can ensure continuity.

Finally, developers can seek projects within already developed areas near existing transit services as a primary way of supporting GO TO 2040. This takes advantage of existing infrastructure and is far more efficient than extending transit infrastructure to serve new locations.

Individuals

By 2040 our population will grow to over 11 million. Every day residents and businesses in our region make a multitude of decisions that have large impacts, but sometimes go unnoticed relative to those made by government. However, many seemingly small actions can have an additive effect and become a real tipping point for changing outcomes on a much larger scale.

This section describes how individual decisions affect plan implementation, and then provides a description of individual actions through a series of local case studies that support the implementation of GO TO 2040. Throughout this section are links to pages on CMAP's website where more information can be found.



For most of us, farming is not an occupation we'd associate with Chicago's south side. But for 37-year-old **JASMINE EASTER**, a small urban farm in the Englewood neighborhood was her leg up toward a better career. To read more about Jasmine, visit <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/jasmine>.



At 14, **ORLANDO GOMEZ** faced a life-changing decision. Should he spend three hours commuting daily to a top-rated magnet high school? Or avoid the arduous trip and attend his local school despite a hostile environment that had touched two older brothers who preceded him there? To read more about Orlando, visit <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/orlando>.

How Individual Decisions Affect Plan Implementation

Individuals can help implement GO TO 2040 in many ways, including small localized actions, coordination with others to form stronger coalitions, or providing broad based support to elected officials implementing the kind of principles emphasized in these pages.

This section is primarily oriented to individuals as residents (whether renters or homeowners), with some other specific recommendations to business owners. Personal and household decisions affect level of involvement in one's own community, water and energy use, or personal transportation and food choices. Business decisions can have even larger repercussions on the environment and transportation systems.



Grocery shopping, getting to work, and taking kids to school can be a hassle for anyone. But when 56-year-old **CINDI SWANSON** lost her vision 15 years ago, she learned just how difficult these everyday tasks can be. To read more about Cindi, visit <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/cindi>.



When 8-year-old **JOHN HATCHER JR.** imagines the future, his first wish is for a clean world: "Then the sky can be blue, the grass can be green. There'd be no pollution, and people would care about each other. I'd really like a perfect world." To read more about John, visit <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/john>.



When **MIKE ABT** started recycling cardboard 20 years ago to help his family business become "more green," it wasn't just the eco-friendliness that appealed to him. To read more about Mike, visit <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/mike>.

Livable Communities

GO TO 2040 seeks to support livable communities, and includes recommendations for land use and housing, resource conservation, open space, and local food. There are many things that individual residents or businesses can do to support the creation of livable communities in our region.

Individuals can help achieve GO TO 2040's vision by supporting planning efforts that strengthen community character and design. Some community gathering places have come about because of a resident with a vision and passion to accomplish something for the greater good of the community. Individuals can take on small projects that can bring community residents together, like turning a vacant lot into a garden or advocating for new bus shelters or participating in **local arts and culture** activities. To pick a common example, individuals can get involved in **historic preservation** efforts in their communities, either joining an existing organization or starting a new one. These projects can be catalysts for communities to come together or simply provide opportunities for people to get to know one another.

Urban design looks back to more **traditional neighborhood development** and typically includes a mix of uses, like putting stores next to offices and housing. This can help communities to be more walkable and can provide support transit service. Business owners have a large impact on creating mixed use areas by choosing to locate in existing community centers. Residents can support this type of development by choosing to shop locally and support businesses in their communities' downtowns. In particular, buying food from local farmers' markets supports **local food** production by investing in local farms.

Business owners can have a great impact on enhancing a community's **urban design**, and also be positively impacted by design efforts. Places that are considered to have good urban design generally reflect communities of the past with mixed-use downtowns, where one can walk to and from homes, businesses, and retail. Individual business owners can support and enhance local character by being sensitive to community context. Store signs, awnings, lighting, and other features should fit within the local community context. Besides physical appearance, businesses can also foster a greater sense of community by providing opportunities for individuals to gather and interact.

Individual households and businesses can have a significant impact on reducing carbon emissions by retrofitting existing buildings to be more energy efficient. In this region, the primary contributor to **climate change** is energy use in homes and businesses. Individuals can address **energy use** by both examining and improving their own practices, beginning with a household or business "energy audit" to take an inventory of everything from the age of appliances to the types of light bulbs used. Some municipalities offer financial incentives to replace inefficient appliances or to update inefficient windows with new, more energy efficient ones. Individuals can also calculate their "carbon footprint" through online tools like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's **Household Emissions Calculator**.



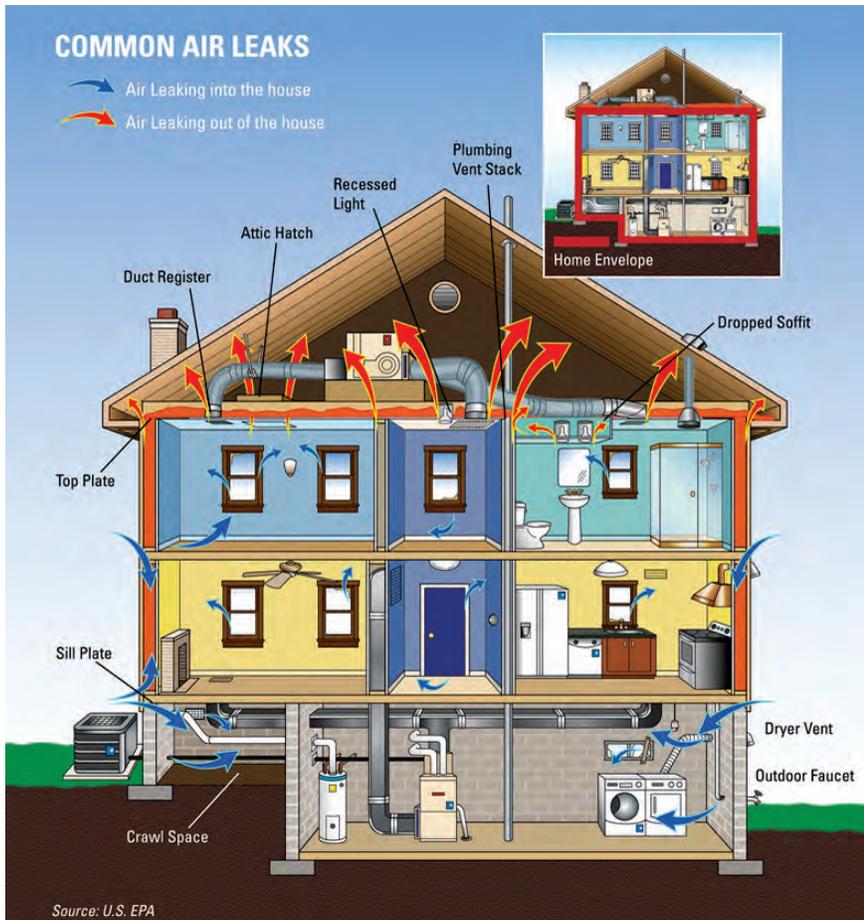
The Old Court House Arts Center in downtown Woodstock was originally constructed in 1857, designed by John Mills Van Osdel. In 1972, the building was slated to be demolished and converted into a parking lot. Woodstock residents Cliff and Bev Ganschow purchased the building, completed an extensive renovation project, opened an art gallery, and rented space to other local businesses. They maintained many historic features of the buildings, including original pressed tin ceilings and some old jail cells. The Old Court House and Jail are now on the National Register of Historic Places. Image courtesy of Flickr user [Steve McCoy](#)



Since 2004, the Village of Tinley Park has hosted its popular public art project "Benches on the Avenue," in which 20 handcrafted wooden benches are placed along Oak Park Avenue after being painted, sculpted, and adorned by local artists. Each year features a different theme, such as "When I Grow Up" (depicting occupations) and "Classic TV," which guides the transformation of these benches and must also retain their function as public seating. Image courtesy of the [Village of Tinley Park](#)



Part of the region's character is contained in its diverse businesses, and can be supported by purchasing local products. In 1996, brothers Jim and Jason Ebel founded Two Brothers Brewing Company. Brewing award-winning artisan beers such as Domaine DuPage (named after their home county of DuPage), the brothers have greatly expanded their production over the years, adding a successful brewpub and even operating their own beer distribution company. Image courtesy of [Two Brothers Brewing Company](#)



One of the quickest, easiest, and cheapest ways to see how you can make your home more energy efficient is to perform a home energy audit. Home energy audits allow you to assess how much energy your home uses and whether there are steps that you can take to cut down on current energy usage. These audits require about 5 minutes of your time, as well as access to the last 12 months of your utility bills. Both ComEd and Energy Star provide online tools for individuals to conduct home energy audits. Image courtesy of U.S. EPA

Another major step individuals and business owners can take to reduce **water use** inside homes and businesses is to install low flow toilets, Energy Star-rated appliances, faucet aerators and other water reducing appliances. The region could save 35.5 million gallons of water daily if 10 percent of the region took basic steps to reduce water waste, and if 50 percent of the population did so, the result would be a reduction of 177.2 million gallons per day.

Local parks are central to communities, and have always been an amenity that families, individuals, and businesses have looked to when considering where to live. Parks serve as great places for people to gather and relax, for kids to play and can be a great source of recreational activities if actively programmed. Research has shown that well maintained parks are associated with increased property values in neighboring communities.



Rain barrels are a great way to reduce stormwater runoff and can prevent water from seeping into your basement. Typically available in 55 gallon drums, rain barrels should be placed at the base of your home's downspout. The barrels help relieve the burden of storm sewers from heavy downpours. Many rain barrels have a spigot near the base that can be hooked up to a garden hose so that the water can be used to water plants. Often your County Soil and Water Conservation District is a good first place to ask about where to purchase a rain barrel. Image courtesy of Andrew Bayley

Parks provide many environmental benefits and have also been linked to increased public health. Individuals can volunteer with their local park districts or forest preserve districts to help during spring clean-up days. Businesses can also sponsor employee volunteer days which serve as great ways to support the local community they exist in. Charitable giving is another way individuals and business can support the creation and enhancement of local parks.

During heavy rains and periods of melting snow, parts of the region experience flooding. Effective stormwater management minimizes damages associated with flooding and prevents the degradation of aquatic resources. Residents and business owners can take steps to reduce stormwater runoff by employing stormwater management best practices, which can help to reduce the impact of heavy storms on storm sewer systems, thereby reducing flooding. **Rain barrels** are a simple way to collect rainwater and reuse it on site to water plants or landscaping. Another method of naturally slowing stormwater runoff is to plant **rain gardens** in places that are naturally wet. Other home improvements — including natural landscaping, or using permeable pavements — can also improve stormwater management.

Individuals can also have an impact on the amount of household waste that is produced. Many communities presently have recycling programs by way of curbside pick-up or drop-off stations, and also provide information on recycling items like motor oil or household paints. Perhaps the easiest way to reduce the amount of waste we as individuals create is to consider the packaging of the products we buy in the first place, like bringing your own reusable bags to the grocery store.

Business can also participate in recycling programs. Everything from batteries and computers to plastic to-go containers can be recycled and it doesn't take much for businesses to support greater recycling at work. Businesses can also replace Styrofoam coffee cups with reusable washable mugs as a simple way to be more environmentally conscious.

There are many civic or volunteer organizations that take on initiatives that affect all areas from community planning, to the environment, to transportation initiatives. As individuals, community issues affect us all in different ways. If you are interested in getting involved in proactive planning, there are a variety of not-for-profit agencies that are working to increase opportunities for public transit to rainwater harvesting. You, as an individual, can make a difference by getting involved, volunteering, voting, attending a public workshop, or writing a letter to your legislators or locally elected official.



Downers Grove Park District has a wide variety of volunteer opportunities available for anyone interested in contributing towards strengthening the park district's services. Volunteers are used to staff one of the park district's several information centers, to provide outdoor education classes, and to provide much needed preservation and restoration services. Volunteers are solicited from all age and social groups, providing special opportunities for youth volunteers and community groups. Image courtesy of [Downers Grove Park District](#)



For three hours every other Saturday, residents of the Village of Oswego bring telephones, radios, TVs, computers, and other recyclable electronics to the Village's public works facility. The goal is to keep electronic material from ending up in landfills, and since the first event in August 2007, the Village E-Recycle program has succeeded in preventing over 113 tons of electronics from doing just that. Image courtesy of Michael Surran



In October 2007, the Greater Auburn-Gresham Development Corp. started the Litter Free Zone Initiative. Through the initiative, approximately 100 students go door to door every other week in the Auburn-Gresham neighborhood, speaking with residents about the importance of recycling, passing out blue bags, and picking up trash. Since the initiative began, volunteers have collected more than 230,000 pounds of recyclable materials and "encouraged hundreds of residents to throw their paper, metal and plastic into blue bins rather than trash cans." Image courtesy of [Greater Auburn-Gresham Development Corporation](#)

Human Capital

GO TO 2040 recognizes that our region's greatest asset is its people. Residents who are educated are more likely to contribute to our economy, be active in their communities, vote in elections, and overall participate in society.

Pursuing further education or receiving training in new work skills can be done at any age, and in our rapidly changing economy, many people will need to learn new skills several times over their careers. Individuals can advance their own educations, or volunteer to help others improve their skills at reading, math, or English as a second language, for example.

Businesses are encouraged to get involved with local educational or workforce training institutions to help provide links between the skills that these institutions are teaching and the actual needs of employers. GO TO 2040 also recognizes and supports the importance of economic innovation, which results from businesses developing and commercializing new ideas. Individuals can benefit from increased government efficiency, including improved access to information and coordinated investments to improve the region's infrastructure.

Regional Mobility

Individuals can also take actions that affect our region's transportation system. This contributes to both livable communities and regional mobility. The following pages discuss the ways that individual residents or businesses can contribute to improving the region's transportation system.

An important element of livability involves having access to transportation modes beyond driving. Residents of the region spend millions of hours in traffic delays each year. The extensive public involvement process undertaken for GO TO 2040 has demonstrated that residents want transportation alternatives that are safe and efficient. People know that there are other ways besides driving to get places — walking and bicycling, carpooling, bus, train — but these options aren't always available. The biggest role that individuals can play in the development of multimodal transportation is to support its development and then use it.

Walkability is also a key component of good urban design. Places that feel comfortable are usually places where there is lots of street activity. When a community is walkable more people — families, couples, elderly, and youth — tend to go out and spend time in their neighborhood. Walkable neighborhoods provide opportunities for chance meetings. It's a way for people to interact with one another, meet their neighbors, and to foster a "sense of community." Individuals can support sidewalks and complete street initiatives by advocating for these changes at the neighborhood or municipal level.

Walkability is an integral aspect of livability, as it not only supports an active lifestyle and positively impacts personal **health**, but it can promote **safety** by increasing the number of people out and about in the community. Pedestrian and bicycle access is particularly relevant around schools, giving students the opportunity to walk or bike to school rather than being driven or bused.

Beyond recreational walking and **bicycling**, individual businesses can support bicycling as a form of transportation to and from work. Businesses of any size can support their employees biking to work by providing incentives like shower facilities, bike storage facilities or by providing annual bicycle safety workshops for employees. Businesses of any size can support bicycling by participating in "Bike to Work Week."



Jane Healy, a parent and school board member in Blue Island School District 130, wanted to give her kids the experience and health benefits that come with walking to school. So every day, she put on her walking shoes and took her kids to school. There were a lot of neighborhood kids who were being driven to school, just a few blocks away. They would see Jane and her kids walking up to the school while waiting in the long drop-off lines of traffic. Soon enough, many asked to join them.

District principals, concerned with traffic congestion around pick-up and drop-off times at the school, offered to support Jane's walking efforts. And she created a program that she called the "Walkable School Bus." After nearly two and a half years, there were so many people walking to school that the program seemed superfluous. Then she decided to ride bikes with her children to school, and that garnered attention and envy of other local school kids, so she created a "Bike Train." They had a set route, like the Walkable School Bus, and picked kids up along the route. This program has also been very popular and the group has now grown to include a Friday Night Bike Club, where dozens of kids congregate at Jane's house to go on a bike ride through the community.

The community of Blue Island has also done extensive Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program planning, prioritized installation of bike racks and bike education for students, successfully won Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) SRTS grants for both infrastructure and non-infrastructure activities, and hosted SRTS training for parents. They have definitely seen biking to school increase due to Jane's efforts. Image courtesy of Jane Healy

If **public transit** options are available, business can also support the use of public transit by participating in pre-tax transit benefit programs. These programs save employees money by reducing their taxable income. Another workplace program that can affect regional transportation systems is offering flexible work schedules; this allows employees to travel at off-peak travel times and can reduce individual commute times.

Many residents would like to have public transit options to get to work or to the grocery store. There are limited resources to provide new transit opportunities across the region. Individuals can support existing transit by getting involved in local civic organizations like the Active Transportation Alliance (ATA), a membership organization that not only educates people on safe alternatives to driving but also supports statewide legislative changes that support transportation alternatives.



Christopher B. Burke Engineering Ltd. (CBBEL) goes the extra mile to encourage employees to ride bicycles to work. Converting a company-owned condo into a locker room gives cyclists a place to shower before heading into the office. They purchase shower passes from a local gym for employees who prefer that option, and allow employees to bring bikes inside the office. CBBEL rewards bicyclists with food and with money; they sponsor a monthly breakfast at a nearby restaurant and pay employees \$0.75 per mile. In 2006, employees logged 3,000 miles biking to work. By 2009, after implementing many of these incentives, the number of miles logged jumped to 20,000 miles for the office of 220 employees. Image courtesy of Clifton Trimble



Abbott Labs, as a member of the Lake Cook TMA, is committed to helping employees take transit where it would otherwise be very difficult to do. They provide workers with a daily shuttle to and from the nearest Metra station. They also have a transit reimbursement incentive program that allows employees who commute by public transit or van pool to pay for transit expenses with money deducted from their paycheck before federal, state and local taxes are applied. From CMAP Library

